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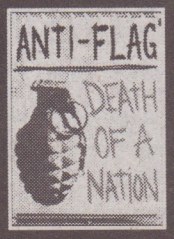
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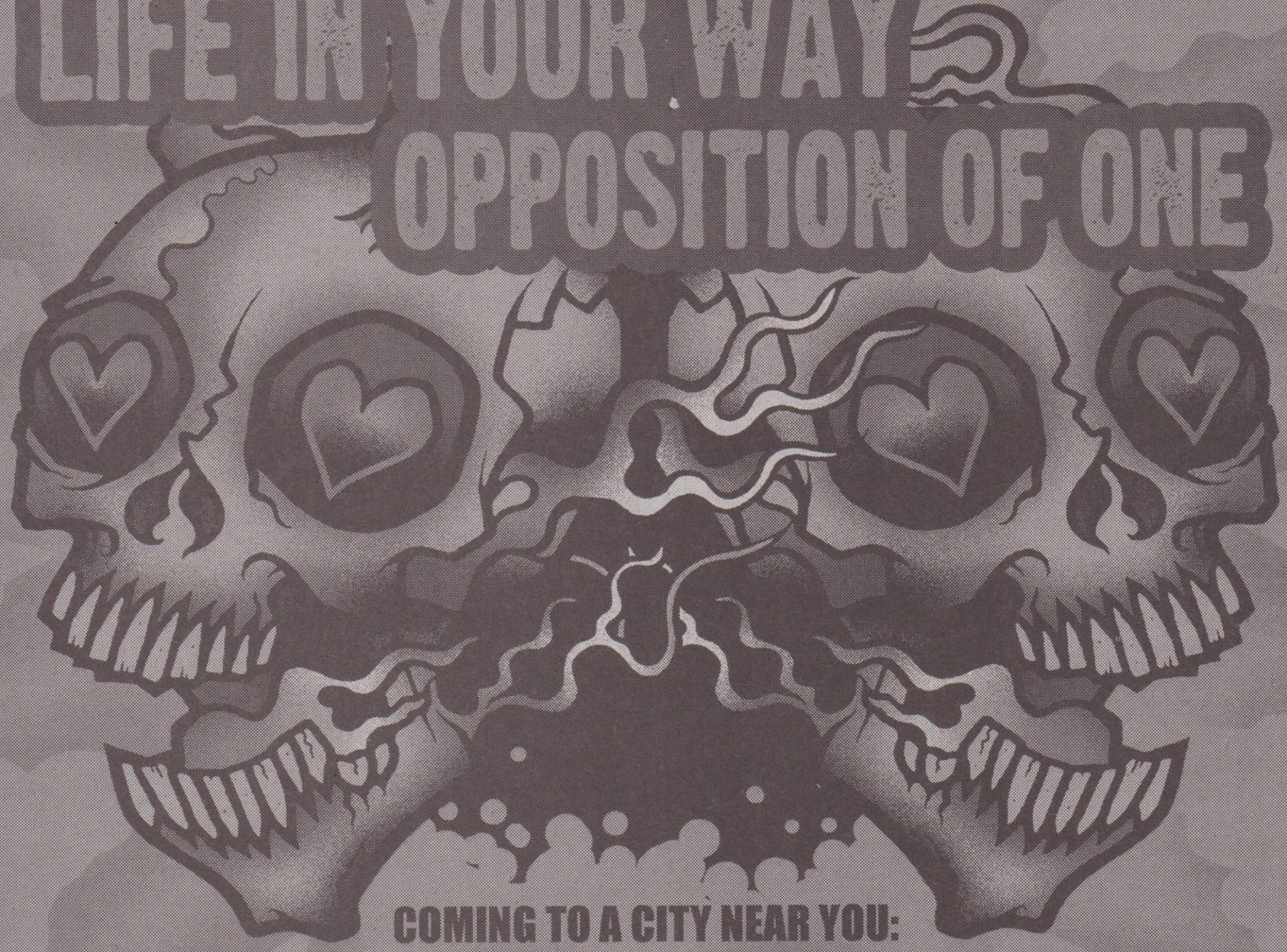
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If you would like to submit something for possible publication, read through it twice, make sure it's presentable, and send it to: **submissions@ampmagazine.com**

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If you have something worth while to say, and you would like to send in a letter, send it to: **feedback@ampmagazine.com**

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ATTENTION:

Alright. Obviously we are a fanzine, and obviously you are fans of bands that we cover (thus you holding us in your hands right now). In an effort to connect you with those that you love, we have decided to start a new section in the magazine where you can write in questions for members of the scene (band members / record label people / industry figures / pimps / etc.) that they could possibly answer for you. It will also be a general question area, that we can try to direct to the right people (ie: How do I get my band on the Warped Tour would be sent over to someone like Kevin Lyman). Just to save us both some time, questions like, "Hey, Davey Havoc, what's your phone number and what are you doing on Friday night?" will probably not be responded to. So, let the flood gates of the "Does Tom Gable have a girl-friend?" questions flow:

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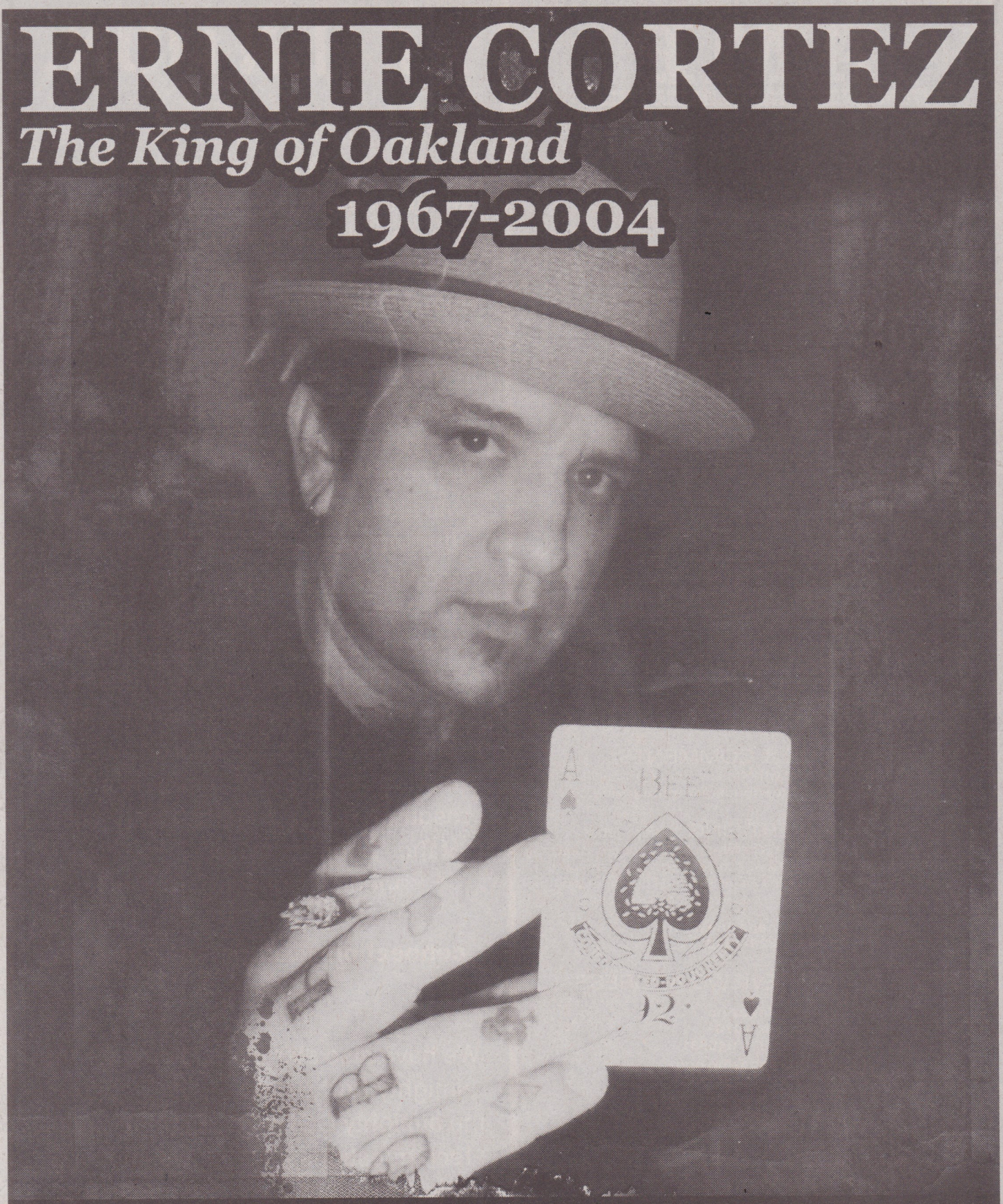
We have also started a column for the almighty Kurt Ballou (guitar god from the almighty CONVERGE) about guitar tech questions. If you have anything that you might be wondering in that area, please get in touch as well.

kurt@ampmagazine.com

ERNIE CORTEZ

The King of Oakland

1967-2004



POWERHOUSE * **OBHC CREW** * DOOMSDAY DEVICE

WORD ON THE STREET

COMPILED BY PUNKNEWS.ORG, PUBLISHED ONLINE MULTIPLE TIMES DAILY, AND MONTHLY IN PRINT

The Offspring / Strung Out on Warped Tour '05

It looks like both The Offspring and Strung Out have been added to the roster of the 2005 Warped Tour. The Offspring announced their participation on their website. This will mark the band's first appearance on the long running festival tour. Drummer Jordan Burns of Strung Out, who haven't appeared on the tour since 1998, made the announcement on the band's message board in late December. He stated that the band would appear on the entire tour. Registered users can find the conversation in the band's message board.

Robotic Empire signs Pink Razors

Robotic Empire has signed Richmond, VA based pop-punk act Pink Razors. The label will re-release the band's first recording Scene Suicide in February. It was originally issued as a limited cassette-only release, and has since been remastered by Scott Hull at Visceral Sound and expanded with a new acoustic track. The EP will be available from both the band and label in time for the band's upcoming Richmond show with Strike Anywhere on February 3rd, with stores having access to it by April 26th. It will be limited to a first press of 1000 copies to raise funds for the band's upcoming full length. The label commented: This may seem a bit strange as Robotic Empire isn't exactly known for infectious pop-punk releases, but we wouldn't be doing this if they weren't seriously BAD ASS. The band absolutely smokes live, can drink you under the table and will have you pogoing & singing along the first (and hundredth) time you hear their songs. The band has some tour dates lied up in March with "neo-folk" singer Josh Small.

More on final Snapcase plans

Some additional information has been announced about the final plans for Snapcase. As we announced, the band will play their final show on Saturday, January 22nd at The Sphere in Buffalo, NY. The band promises a a 20 song marathon pulled from their entire discography, and some special guests. The band is also compiling a DVD of the band's history, with footage of performances, touring and more and is expected this year. Finally, Founder, lyricist and vocalist Daryl Taberski made his first official statement on the breakup: Fourteen years of Snapcase has been an amazing and unexpected journey for us. It has been an incredibly fun and interesting part of our lives where tangible rewards came as a result of hard work. We have had an amazing run as a band with the support of our friends, families and of course, great fans. Putting an end to something that has been so meaningful to us has been a difficult decision to make, but we feel it's the right one. Our final show is going to be a celebration of our time as a band and the music that has been created by us over that period. We will go out on a positive note and show that it's okay to celebrate death.

Successors to John Peel announced

After the sad news of John Peel's passing last October, the question would eventually arise as to who or what would succeed the legendary DJ. On February 1st, The BBC will fill Peel's former slot with three shows hosted by three DJs which will collectively be known as One Music. The goal of the shows will be to champion a ìdiverse, unpredictable, and noncommercial mix of new music.î The new show is hosted by Huw Stephens, Ras Kwame, and Rob Da Bank. Controller of Radio 1 Andy Parfitt said: As a DJ John Peel was unique. Supporting new music and seeking out the unusual was at the heart of what John was about. We have spent a long time debating how best to continue Johnís work and believe that by having a series of DJs hosting a selection of shows under the One Music title, we will ensure that his legacy lives on. I grew up listening to John so it is a massive honor to be able to carry on the work that he did championing new music for so many years. No-one will be able to fill Johnís shoes but we can at least make sure his inspiration keeps us hunting out the next musical gem. More information is available in the announcement from Radio One.

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News is contributed by hundreds of readers, and industry insiders, as well as bands, friends, angry ex-girlfriends, angry ex-boyfriends, animals (hypothetically) and well-wishers of all races, cultures and anthropomorphic persuasions.

The Bomb (ex-Naked Raygun) to record with J.Robbins

According to the official Bomb website, the band will enter the studio with J. Robbins at the end of January to record the follow up to Torch Songs. The Bomb includes vocalist Jeff Pezzati , formerly of Naked Raygun as well as Pete Mittler and Mike Soucy of The Methadones. The record will likely be released on Pezzati's Jettison label.

Statue of Johnny Ramone to be unveiled on January 14

A statue in memory of legendary Ramones guitarist Johnny Ramone will be unveiled by his wife Linda in a public ceremony on January 14 at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery in Los Angeles. The monument will be located not far from where Johnny's bandmate Dee Dee is also buried. A ceremony will take place from 3-5 PM and feature speeches from some of Johnny's closest friends. The bronze statue, created by artist Wayne Toth, will capture Johnny in his memorable stance playing his Mosrite guitar. A quote from the guitarist is written in stone: "If a man can judge success by how many great friends he has, then I have been very successful." Johnny Ramone died on September 15, 2004 at his home in Los Angeles.

Mclusky calls it quits

Welsh three piece Mclusky has called it quits. Singer Andy Falkous recently posted this on the band's website: The three piece rock band known as mclusky have disbanded, as of friday january 7th, 2005.

The reason for this parting is private, though probably not as entertaining as you'd imagine. Personally, I would like to thank all the people, places and times that occured on or near us. I`m grateful for the love and to to a lesser degree, the hate. There'll be more music soon, from all of us.

The band's most recent release was 2004's The Difference Between Me And You Is That I'm Not On Fire.

Fire When Ready assaulted in Greensboro, NC

Members of Fire When Ready were attacked by a group of around 15 people after their show in North Carolina on January 6th. The band members are now recovering at a friend's house in South Carolina and have opted out of playing the next three shows (Myrtle Beach, Summerville and Orlando) on their tour with Anterrabae. They plan on continuing the tour as soon as they're back up to speed.

Anti-Flag working on new record

Chris #2 of Anti-Flag had this to say on the band's website regarding the band's upcoming full-length:

chris #2 reporting from the poorly ventilated, insufficiently heated, and bomb shelter-esque rehearsal space where we have been writing shit loads of songs, 5 days a week, 8 hour a day... some of these songs you'll hear and some of them will be buried as deep in the earth as possible, never to be heard by man, womyn, or child.... we welcome you to this process with open arms. We'll post some photos now, and in the coming weeks we will be posting video of us rehearsing and writing... we've put our sound engineer caps on as well. We've set up some recording gear in the practice space in order to record demos of the songs as we go. if we track some listen able material we will post some of it but i cant promise anything because as of now the sound quality is shit. anyways i hope everyone is fantastic and your holidays were too, please check back for some updates in the next few days...such as topics that we are writing songs and music about, an overview of the new year at hand and much more... much love and much respect- chris #2 and anti-flag

No word yet on what label will be releasing the album. The band's last proper effort was 2003's The Terror State, though they released the Death Of A Nation DVD last year.

Chixdiggit recording new album

Our favourite Calgarians in Chixdiggit posted this New Years update on their recording plans: This morning we're back in the studio to start the new album. We've been figuring out which songs we like and which ones we don't for the last couple of months. Practicing the ones we do like (over and over) is getting kinda old. It's time to play them for real now, I guess. By the end of the month we'll be sending off the master copy to be burnt or pressed up or whatever they do with cd's. Then you guys can hear it too. We'll have updates here every time we accomplish something so, hopefully there'll be lots of updates then...

The band's new record, the follow up to 2000's From Scene To Shining Scene and their first since returning from a lengthy hiatus, is expected later this year on Fat Wreck Chords.

Former Armsbendback guitarist forms Century, Armsbendback future uncertain

Armsbendback guitarist, Carson Slovak has formed a new hardcore/metal band called Century. The new band has posted some tracks here and expects to release a debut EP in early-2005. Finally, the source closes by saying that "...as for ArmsBendBack, all indications are that they've broken up." The band released their only full length, Waiting Room in 2003 via Trustkill.

Update from Boy Sets Fire

Boy Sets Fire has posted an update on their website: [W]e finally got the green light to go ahead and record our upcoming release. We are all very happy that our final demo did what it was supposed to do (getting us in the studio) and now it looks like we'll be starting pre-produc-

tion right after New Years. [...]As you can imagine we can't wait to go ahead and finally throw these songs down. We have about 25 to 30 songs and will have to decide which ones will end up on the record. They are all very different and unique little bastards and I guess there will be a couple of real surprises on the next CD for you as well as for us. We really tried over the course of the last year to be as open as possible to whatever we felt at the time musically without watering down the essence of this band, but instead finding this essence in different places, which, in my case, was what first drew me to a record like "The Day The Sun Went Out." I think this upcoming release has the potential to be a real emotional roller coaster and I can't wait for you to hear it. As far as touring goes we plan on touring our asses off and maybe start the cycle around mid-April...

Nasum vocalist missing after South Asian earthquake

Sources are reporting that Nasum vocalist Mieszko Talarczyk is among those missing after the devastating quakes and tsunamis in South Asia. The band issued a statement about it:

It's very hard for us to make this announcement, but since rumours are already out on the Internet we must make an official statement: Mieszko Talarczyk is missing in Thailand. Mieszko and his girlfriend went to Thailand to spend the holidays. They left a few days before Christmas and were scheduled to return right after New Years Eve. They were staying in a bungalow at Phi Phi Island and when the big wave came and swept the bungalow away the two were seperated. Mieszko's girlfriend is being reported hospitalized "badly injured" but she has been in contact with among others Mieszko's sister who has been posting an "I'm looking for..." at the Phuket Disaster Forum. We will post all sorts of news on the website, but again, please respect our wish in this uneasy time.

The earthquake reached 8.7 on the Richter scale, and the quake and resulting tsunamis have already claimed an estimated 150,000 lives in the region. Talarczyk was among 800 Swedes missing in the aftermath of the quake.

Tom Waits takes on new movie role

According to Anti-, Tom Waits has taken a small role in director Tony Scottís new movie, "Domino," starring Keira Knightly, Mickey Rourke and Christopher Walken. The film is the true story of British actor Laurence Harveyís daughter, Domino, who turned away from her successful career as a model to become a bounty hunter. Waits, who plays the part of a wandering soothsayer, filmed his scenes immediately on returning to America after his acclaimed London show last month. Commenting on why he took the movie role, Waits says: "they won me in a poker game." Waits released Real Gone earlier this year.

The Underhills reunite

San Diego based pop-punk outfit the Underhills have recently reunited after a year-long break. The band is planning to hit the studio in January 2005 to record 4-6 pre-production tracks for an upcoming full-length later next year. The new tracks will be posted on their PureVolume page for sampling. All tracks from their 2002 LP release Belligerence Is Bliss and un-released 2003 Get Smart EP will soon be available for individual purchasing through Downloadpunk.com as well. The band is also planning to play some scattered shows starting this Spring.

In Memoriam: Ernie Cortez of Powerhouse/OBHC

Ernie Cortez, bassist for the local hardcore band Powerhouse, has died of cancer. Ernie also sang for the band Doomsday Device and ran the Sacred Heart tattoo shop in downtown Oakland. Contributor Jesse Luscious adds, "If it wasn't for Powerhouse in some part, the local hardcore kids wouldn't have much of a scene to speak of. Those dudes played brutal NYHC style when it wasn't particularly cool to do so, and helped out a lot of people. They also played a big role in the opening of the short-lived East Oakland venue the Bombshelter. So crack open a beer or fire one up for the big guy, slap on your copy of the first Powerhouse CD and pay tribute to a dude that did his best to make sure hardcore bands would get their due."

In Memoriam: Alex Soria of Nils and Chino (1966-2004)

Mag Wheel Records has sent the sad news that Alex Soria of legendary Montreal pop punk band, The Nils has passed away. The label sent us the following:

Details are sketchy right now, but he was hit by a train in the early evening of Monday Dec. 13th. Alex was of course the founder of the legendary Montreal band The Nils, and also played in Los Pados, Black Sox, and Chino. The Nils were big favorites of Bob Mould of Husker Du back in 86'/87'. Their "S/T" CD on NY's Rock Hotel/Profile sold quite well upon its release in 1987.

Our deepest condolences go out to Alex's friends and family.

In Memoriam: Cadillac Tramps guitarist Mike "Mad Dog" Combs

Word has come in that former Cadillac Tramps guitarist Mike "Mad Dog" Combs has died at age 42. Music news site Blabbermouth is citing a report in the Aspen Times that states Combs found on Vail Mountain in Colorado on Tuesday (Dec. 14) after a nearly 19-hour search. From their article: Mike, a snowboarder who was the boyfriend of film legend Clint Eastwood's daughter Alison, was found about 1 p.m. Tuesday in trees along the Riva Ridge run near the bottom of Vail Mountain, said Kim Andree,

spokeswoman for the Eagle County Sheriffís Office, which investigates deaths on Vail Mountain. This is the first ski-related death this season on Vail Mountain, according to The Aspen Times. The story was also confirmed on Fox 11 KTTV, however we're awaiting further print confirmation and will update this article as that info comes in. Combs played guitar for the Cadillac Tramps from 1999 to 2002. He also sang and played lead guitar in the Back Alley Gators. Our deepest condolences go out to Mike's friends and family.

Beloved calls it quits

Solid State hardcore act Beloved has called it a day.

Frontman of Anal Cunt comes out of coma

Seth Putnam of Anal Cunt has come out of a coma he's been in for the past two months. He has posted a message on his website regarding his condition:

"For anyone who hasn't heard, I had a seizure, which caused me to go into a coma for like two months. I am currently at a rehabilitation hospital trying to get better. I guess my coma was really bad & I almost died, and when I survived the doctors wanted to pull the plug on me because they thought I was going to be a vegetable for the rest of my life. I also had really bad pneumonia and I had to be put on dialysis for kidney failure. I overcame all that shit, though, and I am totally fine again mentally. the only problem is I can't walk or use my hands properly, but I am working on all that and coming along well... hopefully I will be out of here in a couple of months. The Anal Cunt / Damien storm shows didn't happen because I was comatose. Hopefully, we will make them up at a future date. Full blown aids didn't record either. We'll get around to it eventually. A.C. and you're fired will both be working on new albums soon."

PunkVoter refocuses, plans for the future

With the Bush victory in the recent US presidential elections, the future of the PunkVoter organization has been in question. Last month members of the organization (including Jello Biafra, NOFX's Fat Mike, San Francisco supervisor Matt Gonzalez, The Frisk's Jesse Luscious and others) got together in San Francisco to decide the organization's next steps. According to the Alternative Tentacles website "After helping to get more 18-24s to the polls than ever before- and halting the steady slide in the % of youth voters- in November's national US elections- Punk Voter is switching our focus." The organization will concentrate on four areas in the immediate future, from AT: Impending draft and encouraging Conscientious Objectors to register now before the draft occurs. Protect Roe vs. Wade and related choice issues Fight increased media consolidation and encourage media literacy. Repair our Democracy-recountable, accessible touch screen machines, Instant Run-Off Voting, Public Financing, true Campaign Finance Reform, and on and on. All of the details on how the group plans to "stay focused, fun-loving, and pissed!" can be found in Jesse Luscious' new guest column on the PunkVoter website.

The Ghost breaks up

The Ghost has broken up. An excerpt from a post on the Some Records Forums by frontman Brian Moss reads as follows: At this point I'd say it's safe to say that the rumors are true. There has been a lot of confusion regarding the exact status of the band, primarily due to a mutual lack of communication between band members (much of this I am at fault for). After over three years, somewhere around five hundred shows, two full lengths, a split LP, and a couple of rather drastic lineup changes it seemed (this of course being my opinion) that the band entered a downward spiral that couldn't be reversed....From the bottom of my heart I'd like to personally thank everyone who ever took interest in the band, supported the band, was affected by the band, and played in the band. It's been... a whole lotta everything.

The band released their final record This Pen Is A Weapon earlier this year on Some.

Billy Idol to release first new record in 10 years

Billy Idol will release his first album of new songs in over 10 years, titled Devil's Playground, via Sanctuary Records on March 22, 2005. The 13 track record was produced by Keith Forsey and will be preceded by the single and video for "Scream" on January 24th. Among the tracks is a throwback to Idol's early days as member of the Bromley Contingent in England. "World Coming Down" addresses his history in the crowd that followed the Sex Pistols (Siouxie Sioux, Steve Severin, Sue Catwoman, The Clash's Mick Jones and others), as well as his early work with Generation X. Idol and his band, which includes longtime guitarist Steve Stevens, as well as new drummer Brian Tichy, bassist Stephen McGrath, and keyboardist Derek Sherinian, will be on tour worldwide in March 2005. In the press release for the record Idol ever so modestly states "Enough! 2005 is the time for an original punk rocker to show his stuff."

Horace Pinker announces new record and tour in 2005

Horace Pinker has finished recording Texas One Ten and plans to release this new full length in Spring 2005. The record was recorded and produced by Mass Giorgini and the band. No label has been announced yet. They've posted a track on their purevolume site called "Exhale to Asphyxiation" and the band will be touring Europe in April/May - Brazil in June/July - United States and Canada in July/August.

FEB/MAR 2005 RELEASE SCHEDULE

DATE	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
2/1	Alston	Voodoo For Fun And Profit	Repossession
2/1	Anberlin	Never Take Friendship Personal	Tooth & Nail
2/1	Know How, The	Now In Technicolor	Union 2112 (Union Label)
2/1	Various	Cake Boy (DVD)	Kung Fu
2/1	Via Satellite	Cities are Temples	Loud and Clear
2/7	Bottom Line	Eloquence	Nice Guy
2/7	Gigantor	G7!	Golf
2/7	Lag Wagon	Live In A Dive	Fat Wreck Chords
2/8	Academy Is, The	Almost Here	Fueled By Ramen
2/8	Blue Meanies	Full Throttle (re-issue)	Thick
2/8	Burning Season, The	The Haze Of Infatuation	Hand Of Hope
2/8	Maroon	Endorsed By Hate	Abacus
2/8	Open Hand	You And Me	Trustkill
2/8	Unwritten Law	Here's To The Mourning	Lava
2/8	Various	¡POLICIA! A Tribute To The Police	Militia Group
2/14	Against Me!	Sink. Florida. Sink/Unsubstantiated... (7")	No Idea
2/14	Combat Wounded Veteran	This is Not an Erect, All-Red Neon Body	No Idea
2/14	Four Letter Word	Like Moths To A Flame	Newest Indüstry
2/14	Rumbleseat	Discography and Then Some	No Idea
2/14	Toasters, The	Little Hidden Secrets (DVD)	Union 2112 (Union Label)
2/15	Goldfinger	Disconnection Notice	Maverick
2/15	Gunmetal Grey	Solitude (mcd)	Indianola
2/15	Smackdown, The	Calling The Spots	Goodfellow
2/15	Statues	Aux (re-issue)	Pelado
2/15	Suicide File, The	Some MIstakes You Never Stop Paying...	Indecision
2/15	Symphony In Peril	The Whore's Trophy	Facedown
2/15	Various Artists	Innate Rebellion	Spiral
2/21	Break, The	Handbook For The Hopeless	Golf
2/21	MDC	Millions Of Dead Cops / More... (re-issue)	Golf
2/21	Raw Power	Screams From The Gutter (re-issue)	Golf
2/22	Armor For Sleep	What To Do When You Are Dead	Equal Vision
2/22	Comeback Kid, The	Wake The Dead	Victory

FEB/MAR 2005 RELEASE SCHEDULE

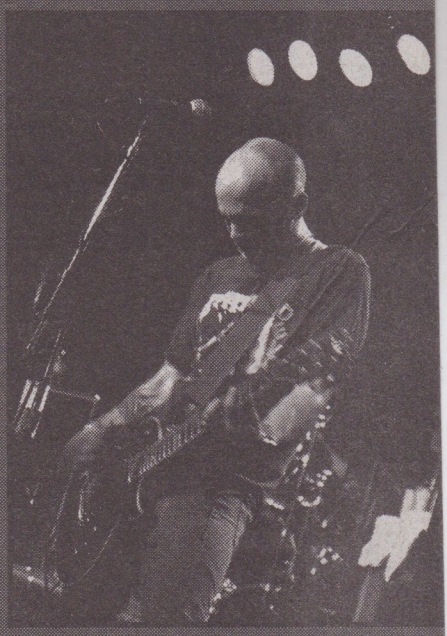
DATE	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
2/22	Darkest Hour	Party Scars and Prision Bars... (DVD)	Victory
2/22	Gym Class Heroes	The Papercut Chronicles	Fueled By Ramen
2/22	Hidden In Plain View	Life In Dreaming	Drive-Thru
2/22	Homer	The Punkrock Verses	Funtime
2/22	Ida	Heart Like A River	Polyvinyl
2/22	Little Compass	Discover	Negative Progression
2/22	Loved Ones, The	S/T (cdep)	Jade Tree
2/22	Vacancy, The	Heart Attack	A-F
2/22	Various	Atticus...Dragging the Lake Vol III	Side One Dummy
3/1	Goldrush	Ozona	Better Looking
3/7	Moneybrother	To Die Alone	Burning Heart
3/8	Alove For Enemies	The Harvest	Facedown
3/8	Dan Band, The	The Dan Band Live	Side One Dummy
3/8	Decibully	Sing Out America	Polyvinyl
3/8	Divide By Zero	Answer to No One	Jump Start
3/8	El Toro	May and Murielle	Undecided
3/8	Emanuel	Soundtrack to a Headrush	Vagrant
3/8	Goodwill, The	Insult, Injury, Etc...	Abacus
3/8	Kaddisfly	Buy Our Intention, We'll Buy You...	Hopeless
3/8	Over It	Silverstrand	Lobster
3/8	Paint It Black	Paradise	Jade Tree
3/21	Black Flame Dispute	Portrait Of The Human Condition	Golf
3/21	Smoke Or Fire	Above the City	Fat Wreck Chords
3/21	Snuff	tba (Greatest Hits & B-sides)	Fat Wreck Chords
3/22	A Change Of Pace	An Offer You Can't Refuse	Immortal
3/22	Copeland	In Motion	Militia Group
3/29	American Hi-Fi	Hearts On Parade	Maverick
3/29	Brain Failure	American Dreamer	Thorp
3/29	Mae	Everglow (tbc)	Tooth & Nail
3/29	Thousand Foot Krutch	The Art Of Breaking	Tooth & Nail
3/29	Thrice	If We Could Only See Us Now (DVD)	Island
3/31	Nuclear Saturday	tba (full-length)	New School

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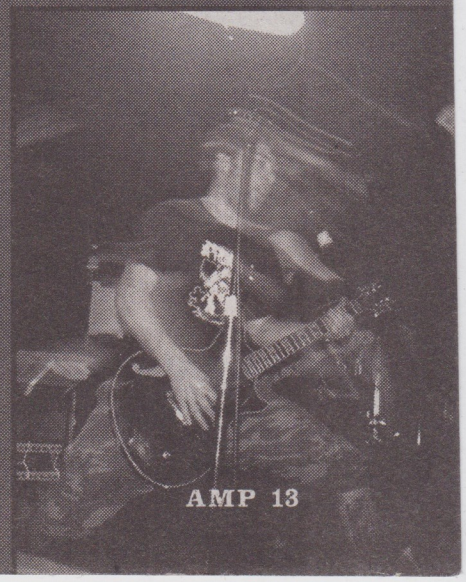


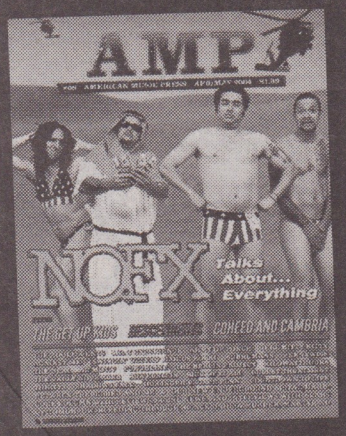












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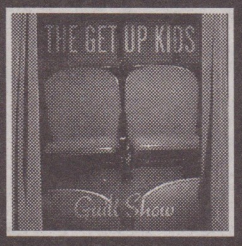
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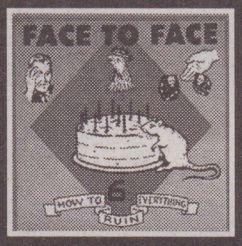
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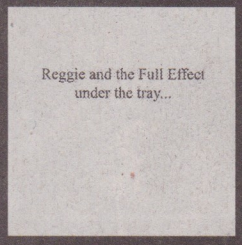
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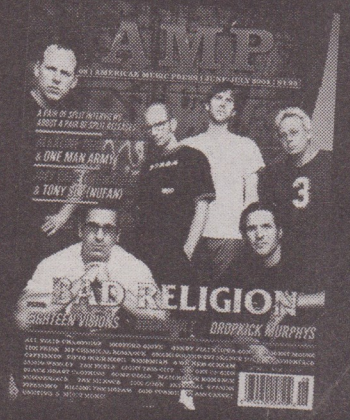
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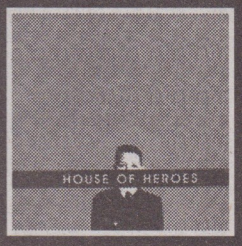
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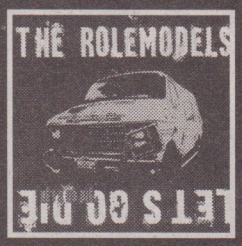
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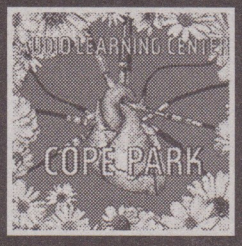
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7 SECONDS

Twenty Five Years of Our Core

By Jeff Alexander / Photo By Allyson Seconds

What inspires us to keep our inner flames ignited? It's this introspective question that has kept 7 Seconds persevering for twenty-five years, bringing their timeless message of equality and unity to stages across America and Europe. Rising up from Reno, 7 Seconds have ultimately proven that creative evolution and personal growth remain unlimited, and that an individual's sincere intentions to communicate and empathize can endure over time.

"I've never been one to mince words. I still have some anger and passion that I wanna still communicate to people. I don't think that's ever gonna go away. It might be a little harder to get up onstage now, but whenever we get together, we all spark each other to just go for it," says singer Kevin Seconds.

The anger inside is just as strong as when Kevin first stepped up to the mic and declared, "Here's your warning!" This rallying cry began their seminal full-length debut, The Crew.

"I've been in 7 Seconds half my life. It's a little strange. There have been times when people said, 'Oh, they're washed up.' We don't tour like we used to, but we still hope that when we're out there that we're relevant. I don't feel like we've slowed down," declared Kevin.

'Take It Back, Take It On, Take It Over' isn't an elegy for times gone by, or a swan song. What 7 Seconds offer on their frantic new record is a declaration of endurance and an intense celebration of just why they continue to challenge the way they view their surroundings, as well as each other. Undoubtedly, 7 Seconds have brought Hardcore to new heights with the relentless conviction that artists can have more to say than just empty slogans. Lyrically, 7 Seconds have tackled such issues as violence and sexism.

"I do have a huge respect for women and what they have to go through on a daily basis. There is just so much rampant sexism out there; I want to be conscious of it. If I have a song that has

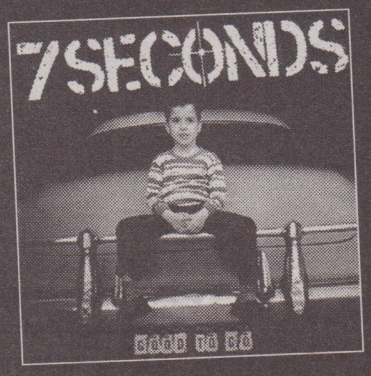




"Have a message, and believe in what you speak on. But don't lose sight of the humanity."

a message, I think I'm pretty clear."

Within the new record, Kevin voices his belief that contemporary artists have lost sight of creating issue-based music, and how punk feels a little too comfortable today.



"I remember driving from Reno to LA to see Fear and Circle Jerks. It was one of the most frightening experiences of my life, but it was also incredible! I had no idea of what was going to happen," he exclaimed. Kevin's indictment of contemporary artists serves a broader function than empty criticism.

When Kevin muses, 'So gifted and smart, everyone looks so pretty, but where is the danger in Hot Topic city?' I'm hopeful that younger music fans will realize that rock n' roll subculture has the amazing potential to convey convictions that can spark impacting changes, as opposed to solely focusing on fashion.

"Have a message, and believe in what you speak on. But don't lose sight of the humanity. I just think you have to balance all that stuff," concluded Kevin.

What sets 7 Seconds apart from their contemporaries is their respectable ability to still interact with longtime fans, while continuing to embrace a youthful crowd. "We're happy and lucky we still attract a youthful crowd, as well as older fans. We're talking to kids, and some say 'My mom has your record.' Its cool because you're happy to hear that people pass you off to their offspring," laughed Kevin.

It's here that the anthem 'Your Parents Hardcore' becomes fully realized. This sentiment isn't exclusively aimed to their longtime fans. It's a playful realization that their diverse audience can easily co-exist.

"For me, unity is the idea that historically people come together and make something happen," says Kevin. This lofty ideal continues to be a challenging goal to see realized. In the early to mid 80's, Hardcore shows were sadly plagued by violence, and some continue to see this as a black cloud above the shining achievements of the subculture. There are many factors as to why violence occurs. Despite rock n' roll being a subculture, the dominant culture will always play a strong role within the social process of another, its inevitable.

Lack of communication and falling victim to stereotypes will always be a recipe for violence and hate. The Los Angeles Punk and Hardcore subcultures were infamous breeding grounds for physical violence, and remain documented in the films Suburbia and Decline of Western Civilization.

"When you had these groups of people, who were just thugs and they embraced your band and said, 'I love what you guys do!' and I was like, 'Why? Do you read the lyrics and understand what we're saying?' You start questioning yourself."

Despite the success of 7 Seconds, the band remains aware that alongside their achievements there have also been countless struggles. What makes 7 Seconds so special and in marked contrast from their contemporaries, is their pursuit to transcend negativity.

"We've gone through so much this and that. We've been doing our thing, and people have loved us and hated us," reflected Kevin.

Change is inevitable, and is an integral part for growth. Perhaps a watershed moment for 7 Seconds was the release of 1986's 'New Wind,' in which the lyrical content focused more on intimate, personal feelings as opposed to more pressing social issues. The lyrics were encompassed by more melody, and less aggressive rhythms gave way to a more moody feeling, which had many fans polarized. The band's deviation had critics immediately writing the record off. 7 Seconds took a chance and made a creative leap, but hardcore purists





"People will look at us and go, 'Why are you still doing this? You're 43 years old!' Why is it when we're onstage does this feel like the most right and natural thing to be doing? It's been something that has been pretty amazing and special to us for 25 years."

refused to follow.

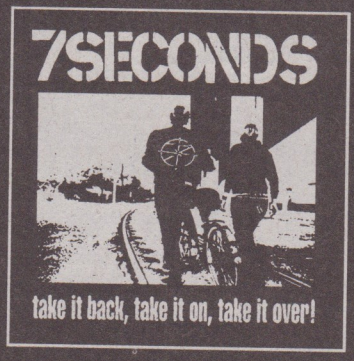
"The very strange thing when we first came out with 'New Wind' and there was this backlash, we were still out touring. A lot of the times the crowd would just stand there and go, 'What's going on here?' Of course we were hurt by it, but it actually made us stronger in what we did."

Even today, Kevin's songwriting projects are a sharp departure from anything

7 Seconds has ever done, such as his recent exploration in acoustic songwriting. The nakedness a songwriter feels when playing acoustically can be frightening, and Kevin was all too quick to agree.

"I did a two-week tour in England with just me on an acoustic guitar. It was one of the craziest things I've done in awhile. I was going over there pretty much blind. It was unexpected in how well it went. I completely underestimated people. It drives me to keep trying to do more things like that, keep it interesting," stated Kevin.

As Kevin continues to personally evolve, 7 Seconds have changed their songwriting approach, and even the recording process underwent dramatic changes. The dynamic of 7 Seconds has been positively impacted by Kevin's recent achievement of becoming a recording engineer. "It was very frustrating. It was tough, but it was the most fun we've had recording in years. We literally locked ourselves in, and did it at our own pace."



The end result is evident on 'Take It Back, Take It On, Take It Over.' 7 Seconds sound more energetic than ever!

"We sent some demos to Epitaph and Fat, and nobody seemed that interested due to the perceived inconsistency over the last few years, when we were trying different sounds," remarked Kevin. "I'm just making a record for the kids that love this kind of music. I'm not looking at this band to being a ticket to a new car. People will look at us and go, 'Why are you still doing this? You're 43 years old!' Why is it when we're onstage does this feel like the most right and natural thing to be doing? It's been something that has been pretty amazing and special to us for 25 years."

The five year lapse between 'Good To Go' and 'Take It Back, Take It On, Take It Over' almost feels necessary in order for 7 Seconds to compose a record that is relevant today, as opposed to just releasing a record for the sake of recording.

"Honestly, I would do this any day of the week, but I know the reality of what it takes to get us to move these days. To come together, write and rehearse a new record, it's a little harder now than it used to be. At some point, it just clicks into place. Somehow, it magically comes together in the nick of time," laughed Kevin.

Kevin remains very grateful for all he has experienced. It's evident that his gratitude evokes a sincerity that remains





unquestioned, as opposed to a token nod of appreciation. "We were this little band from Reno, Nevada. Just the fact that we got out of Reno, we were able to be a part of something that I still consider one of the greatest things ever!"

Kevin began reminiscing how he and his brother, bassist Steve Youth first fell in love with Punk music and the subculture.

"We were big fans of The Dils, they had this ep, '198 Seconds of The Dils' and I was so in love with punk rock that I would just write album titles on my clothes. This was still when Steve and I lived with my mom. We had this desk in this room we shared and I wrote '197 seconds of The Dils', I miswrote the title. Over time, everything else faded, but the 7 Seconds part was there, and I circled it, I thought it looked cool," laughed Kevin.

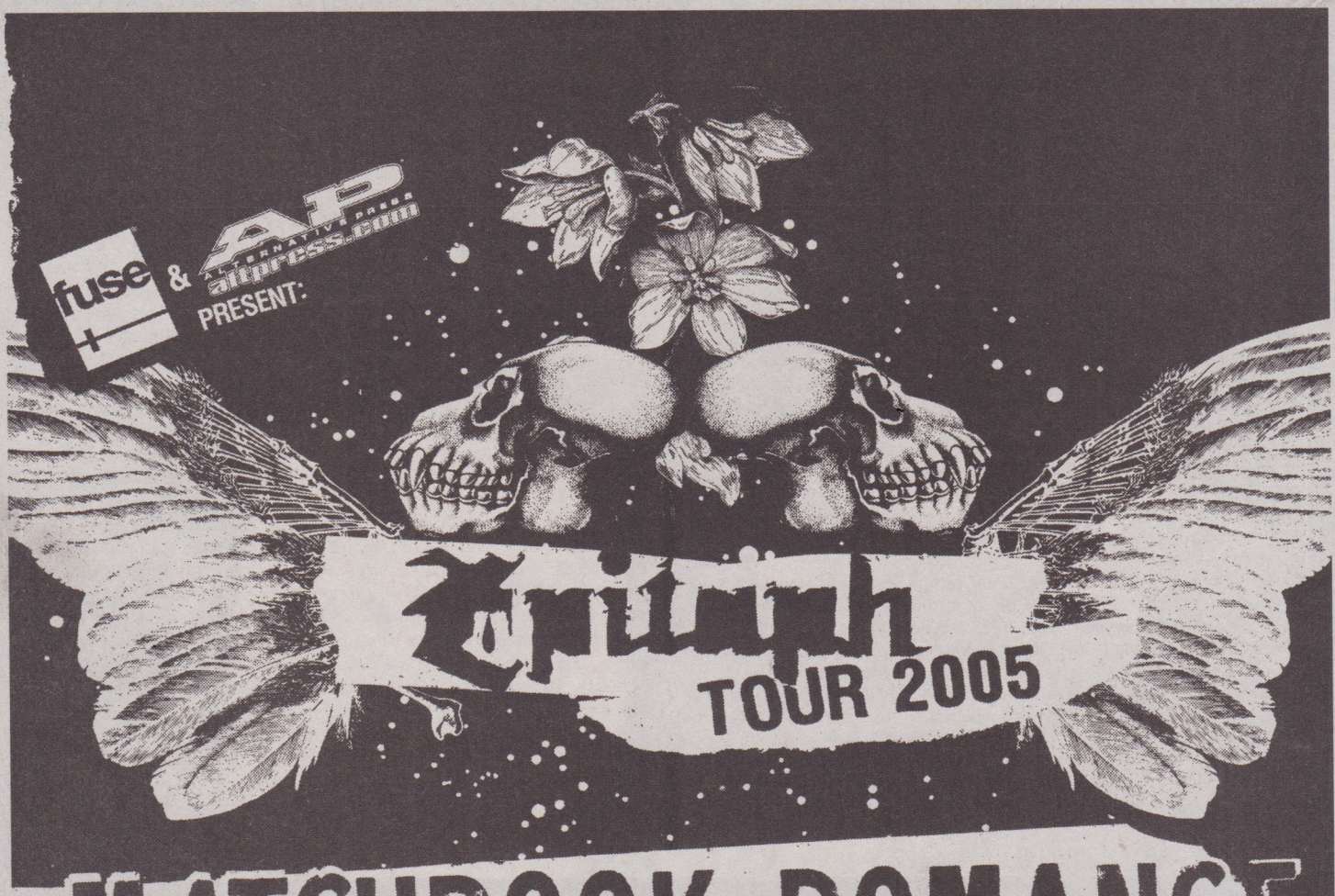
Years ago, Kevin and Steve Youth came to a strange crossroad that would've ultimately disbanded 7 Seconds. During the late 80's, Metallica had suffered a loss with the untimely death of their bassist, Cliff Burton. Steve Youth heard Metallica were holding tryouts, so he auditioned.

"The week before Steve went to the rehearsal, he had a job working at Reno Airport, and had cut all of his hair off. When he first went into the rehearsal, Metallica's manager said, 'I got to tell you, one strike against you, you don't have any hair' and this was back when Metallica looked like lions, they had all this hair!" says Kevin laughing.

"It would've been weird seeing my brother on MTV. A week before the rehearsal, I remember riding the city bus in Reno, and these kids were sitting in front of me, wearing Metallica gear. Would I tap them on the shoulder and say, 'Hey, my brother plays in Metallica? It happened, it's a pretty funny story. It would've been a perfect little chapter in our book," laughed Kevin.

As 7 Seconds make their leap into 2005, and celebrate their 25th anniversary, we should realize that not many artists have been fortunate enough to transcend challenges, and convey a sustaining message within their art. Every individual has his or her memory, whether it's that first stage dive, or anxiously dropping the needle to vinyl, 7 Seconds remain and grow with us. The band's refusal to accept the parameters of age and their rejection of elitist rules truly preserve the passion of 7 Seconds. This undeniable passion has sparked all of us to embrace a message that never had to be returned to sender.

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JAWS 5 - THE COLUMN!

Last week one of the cable networks ran a "Jaws" marathon. I felt bad that I had other things to do, because I really wanted to catch up on the series. Like everyone else on the planet, I saw the first "Jaws" movie, but I can't remember for sure if I ever saw "Jaws 2." I don't think I did. I do remember seeing "Jaws 3" in a theater. It was in 3-D, and it was absolutely terrible. (Although the 3-D glasses made me look cool) I never saw "Jaws 4 - The Revenge," so I'm not sure who gets revenge. Maybe people got revenge on the shark for the first three movies, maybe the shark got revenge on the people, I'm not sure. I believe in "Jaws 4" the shark goes up on land to chase people. I think there was even a scene where the shark goes into a store and purchases a handgun. Who could forget the classic slogan from the "Jaws 4" poster; "Revenge Doesn't Stop At the Water Line." That brings up what I consider a fundamental flaw in the "Jaws" series; you never know who to cheer for. I generally find myself rooting for the people the first half of the movie, but eventually I get fed up with the people, and by the end of the film I want to see the shark rip them to pieces. Hey, I just sat through a crap movie, I want to see somebody pay the price. I don't think there was a fifth "Jaws" movie (which would have completed the trilogy), but I'm not sure. I suspect they stopped after four because fewer people were going to each movie, although I'd hate to think that the "Jaws" producers were only in it for the money. Maybe there will be a "Jaws 5" someday. You never know, I'm still waiting for the "Thelma and Louise" sequel, but those folks are really taking their sweet time.

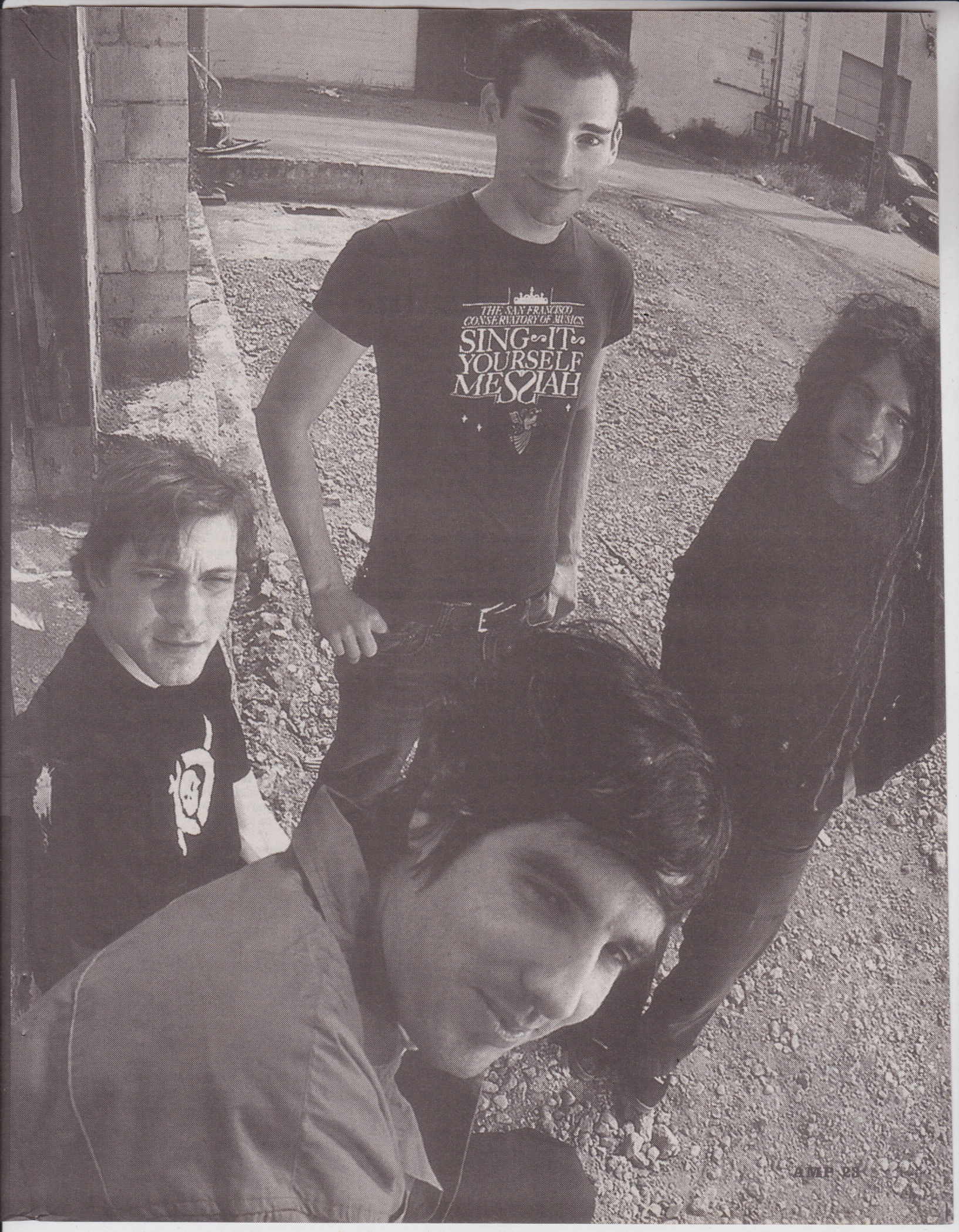
Recently I saw an ad on TV for a movie called "Open Water." The ad said it was "The Best Shark Movie Since Jaws." I tried to think of what great shark movies there have been since "Jaws." I didn't see "The Passion Of The Christ" (or as I like to call it, "The Passion Of The The Christ The"), but I didn't notice any sharks in the trailer. I did hear that Mel Gibson is considering a sequel where Christ is eaten by a shark, which I'm willing to bet he'll claim is historically accurate. "Titanic" was a great movie, but even though thousands of passengers were dumped in the ocean, not one was eaten by a shark. Talk about a missed opportunity. Trust me, if Spielberg had directed that there would have been blood in the water, also some spaceships and maybe a few Nazis. Drowning is the one thing those passengers wouldn't have had to worry about. Although "Oceans Eleven" had ocean in the title, oddly it had no sharks. The "Matrix" series had good special effects, but not one shark in the whole trilogy. "The Blair Witch Project", pretty scary, but no sharks. "Silence Of The Lambs", plenty of people being eaten, but not by sharks. "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider"; didn't see that one. "The Godfather"; the shark didn't eat anybody, it just made a brief cameo appearance. "Erin Brockovich"; no sharks in the theatrical release, but the DVD has an alternate ending where Ms. Brockovich is eaten by a shark. "Shakespeare In Love"; had a great shark scene, but it was cut when it did poorly with test audiences. Perhaps the most savage shark attack ever depicted in film was in "The Little Mermaid", but the MPAA required the studio to delete the scene in order to maintain a G rating. Well, I've got to go now, I just rented a Kevin Spacey DVD called "Swimming With Sharks", and the guy at the video store told me it's got some really cool shark footage.



moneen.

By Samantha Everts

With a positive energy force like members of Moneen possess onstage it's impossible to not enjoy their live performances, 'We're not really good at anything else' muses frontman Kenny Bridges. This Brampton, Ontario, group has been touring relentlessly since first getting together in 1999 and have since traveled across North America and Europe, opening for groups like Braid, Saves the Day, and Muse. Their first EP on Smallman Records, 'The Theory of Harmonial Value,' first got the underground's attention in 2001 and upon releasing 'Are We Really Happy With Who We Are Right Now' in 2003 received enough acclaim for Vagrant Records, home of such groups as Alkaline Trio and Face to Face, to sign them immediately. Claiming to be influenced by groups like Jimmy Eat World, Moneen plays a form of aggressive punk-pop that has yet to be successfully imitated in style by any other groups right now. (Who else would write a ten-minute punk song?) The wildly charismatic Kenny Bridges (guitar and vocals) provided some insightful comments on the band and why he doesn't like lobsters... unless they are dancing.


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SING IT YOURSELF MESSIAH

It's been said that you named your band Moneen after a beautiful French girl. Did you ever consider the name Helga? That's a sexy name.
No, because Helga is not a French name. When I think of Helga I think of women with axes breaking wood into splinters.

Why is live performance so important to the band?
Because we're not good at doing anything else… and we're not really that good at that either. [Laughs]

Having now played with well-renown groups from Braid to Saves The Day, did you ever see your band reaching this point?
No, not at all. If I ever thought I would come to the Babylon in Ottawa and have people say it sold out, I would have been laughing and peeing all over myself. It's great that it happened so quickly but at the same time, a lot of hard work went into it. We've toured a lot since we started this band in April of '99 and really we haven't stopped since.

How important has been maintaining friendships between band members?
[It's] Very important to maintain the level of 'well that guy's alright' for each other. If you like each other too much then you actually start caring about the other people instead of just trying to do great rock poses that show off your own moves.

Could you describe one?
My legs are spread very wide and one fist is the air and I am a kind of [puts on French accent] 'Look-At-Me' kind of look on my face.

How has being on Vagrant changed the band?
They made us write three-minute pop songs with catchy choruses.

And that's a good thing?
No they didn't! All the songs are like ten minutes long.

How do you come to write a ten minute long song anyways?
Just gotta keep lettin' it live, let it grow, let it expand, let it metamorphisize, let it cocooninize, into a nice butterfly. Yeah.

The theme of betrayal is evident on your most recent release- how have you grown?
I don't think there's that much of a theme of betrayal on the record.

Sorry, I guess that's me misinterpreting it, but with song lyrics like, "Screw you and I, I hope you burn…"
Ok, there's one song. The theme of the record is more about life lessons, and things that are going on in my life right now. When we were recording I started to realize it was more a theme of death than anything on the record… it's kind of morbid and strange but you roll with the punches, right?

What are your favorite tracks to play to play live from Are We Really Happy?
"The Last Song I'll Ever Want to Sing."

What did you grow up listening to?
I really liked the Beach Boys a lot. I liked Public Enemy back in the day. Red Hot Chili Peppers was my first 'favorite' band.

Did your parent's musical tastes rub off on you?
No, not at all. My mom loves the Guess Who and is obsessed with Berton Cummings. We played the Berton Cummings Theatre in Winnipeg, which was very nice, but the fact that it's named after Berton Cummings doesn't impress me at all.

I've heard rumours that you will be heading into the studio soon to record new album.
We're going to start doing demos when we get home which is exciting because I've been dying to do new stuff for a really long time now. We'll see where it goes. We're probably going to alienate all of the people that are into our band right now.

What are you writing about, besides ice cream?
I don't know. I usually just write on what I can reflect on. Like, 'what's going on in the world right now, what I'm doing in life?' I'm not that trivial when it comes down to the process of writing. Its more what I see is what I write down on paper.

What was it like making the new video, "Start Angry… End Mad"?
It was fun. It was a bunch of friends in my house when my parents were away. We destroyed the place, everyone was dressing in silly costumes.

Who came up with the video concept?
Me and my friend Jeff the director. We basically wanted to do something that was totally opposite from what the song's about so us in crazy costumes running around destroying the place, doing any stupid thing we could think of was pretty much the exact opposite of that song.

What was up with the giant lobsters?
What, you don't like lobsters?

No, I do.
I don't.

Then why did you include them?
I like lobsters. I don't like lobsters. [Laughs] I don't know. Lobsters are funny when they dance.

Have you flipped to Much Music and seen the videos yet?
Yes, that actually happened once and that never happened for the "Are We Really Happy…" video so I was excited when I saw the "Start Angry… End Mad" video.

Did you find it really surreal?
Kind of, but at the same time it was on the same TV that I had showed it to many of my friends before so it wasn't actually as crazy as I thought it might be because, you know, I'm watching it on the same TV that I watched it on the night before, but this time it's on Much Music. It was kind of neat seeing our name on the bottom though.

Can you tell me a little about the European tour coming up for you guys?
WOOO!!! That's exciting actually. We're going to be going in less than a month with FATA, Senses Fail, and Emanuel. We've been to the UK twice now but I really want to go to Germany. We're actually playing Amsterdam. I am very excited to go.

What does the future hold for Moneen?
[laughs] I'm sure lots more touring and hopefully a new record in the next ten years.

Last thoughts, comments, advice, messages to readers or listeners?
If you're listening be happy that you're not deaf because you're listening. People that are deaf wouldn't be listening.

www.moneen.com



DARKEST HOUR

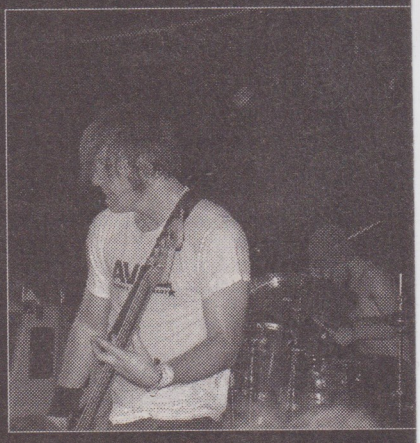
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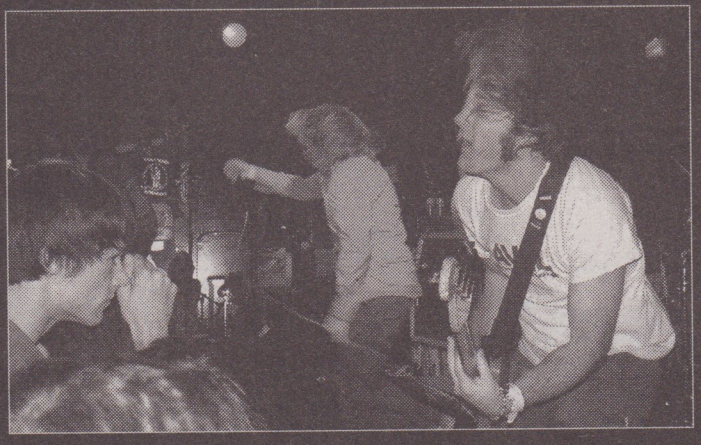
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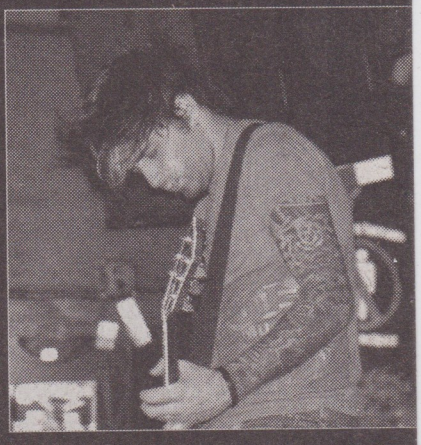












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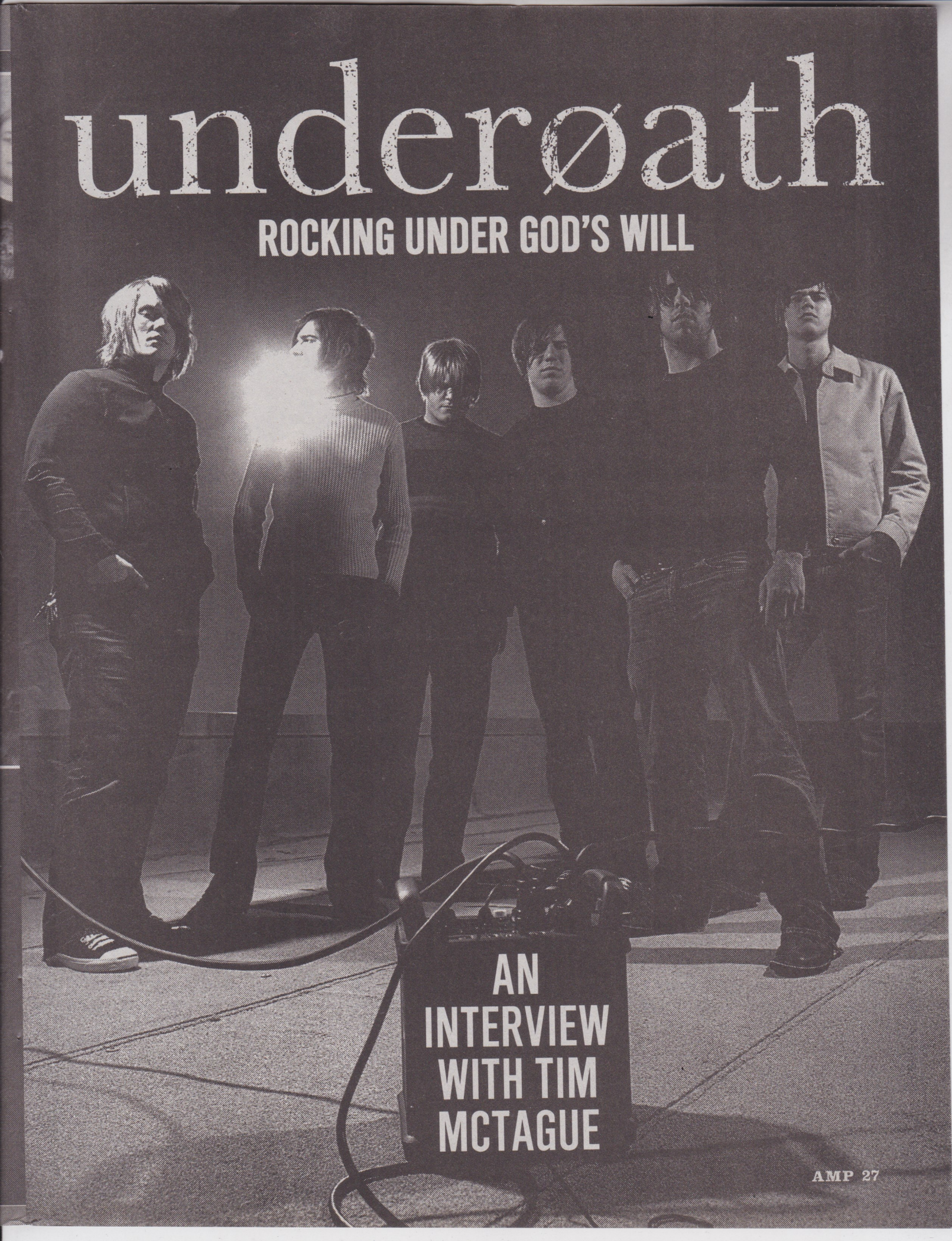
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ROCKING UNDER GOD'S WILL



AN INTERVIEW WITH TIM MCTAGUE



Photo By David Stuart

By Don Sill

"God's will," that's how guitarist, Tim McTague views Underoath's success and it is with the will of God and a few catchy choruses, that has helped his band earn such a tremendous buzz within emo/hardcore/Christian rock circles.

Underoath's latest album, *They're Only Chasing Safety* on Tooth & Nail Records, has quickly become a favorite amongst many, while the single "Reinventing Your Exit" has crossed over into the mainstream and now, in 2005 the band is slated to tour with The Used, Killswitch Engage and My Chemical Romance on The Taste Of Chaos Tour in February.

Yes, big things have been happening for McTague and his mates, but don't be mistaken, things weren't always this good for the Florida-based rockers.

Since the bands inception in 1998 the hard stomping emocore outfit from Tampa have endured and overcome plenty of trials and tribulations- including member changes, various musical directions and even a break-up- yet through sheer determination, they have worked through the harsh times and managed to become a stronger band now then they were when they first began.

One of the hardest moments in Underoath's six-year history was after the abrupt departure of original singer and band founder, Dallas Taylor in 2003. These were uncertain times for the band who had actually broken up due to various in-house feuding. But while their future looked bleak magic would happen when they discovered the answer which was right under their noses. "Spencer [Chamberlain] dates a girl who was roommates with our keyboardist, Chris [Dudley's] girlfriend," explained McTague, "So, when we were off tour Chris and Spencer would always hang out and when we needed a singer he was the first person we asked."

With new vocalist, Chamberlain on board, along with McTague, James Smith, Christopher Dudley, Grant Brandell and Aaron Gillespie, Underoath was able to move forward and eventually record their most successful album to date in 2004 with They're Only Chasing Safety.

The Lord works in mysterious ways and while McTague views Underoath's success as "God's will" many of their fans see them as the next great emocore band







Photos By Greg Glenn

who, with a positive outlook and Christian belief system, is a positive influence who sheds a positive light during these dark times which are overloaded with religious scandal, holy wars and evil doers.

AMP spoke with Tim McTague about Underoath's recent success, roller-coaster past and bright future.

YOU GUYS ARE OFF TO A BIG START IN 2005.
Yeah we're leaving in two weeks to go to Europe.

COOL, THIS LOOKS LIKE IT'LL BE A BIG YEAR FOR UNDEROATH.
Yeah, we hope so. I mean 2004 was already more then we expected and this year is looking good and we're stoked and ready for whatever happens.

THE TOUR IN EUROPE WILL BE WITH SILVERSTEIN AND ROSES ARE RED, RIGHT?
Yeah, also our friends from the U.K. called The Hurt Process will be with us. They're hanging out with us and we'll be there for about two and a half weeks and we'll all have some fun, do some shows.

HOW CRAZY DO YOUR LIVE SHOWS GET?
I don't know...I wouldn't necessarily say that we do anything crazy. I mean we do what we do, you know. We just play hard and we really like that we do and we really like the music that we play. I think that kids who come and see us just kind of naturally feed off of it because for the most part we're intense. Yeah intense is how I would put it. We don't really stage anything or have any moves or anything, we just kinda roll with it and hope that it works out.

JUST PURE ROCK ADRENALINE.
Oh yeah, it's definitely not a slow show by any means.

TAKE ME THROUGH LIFE ON THE ROAD. DO YOU GUYS CAUSE ANY RUCKUS OUT ON THE ROAD?
Um...yeah...everybody does, I think. I mean, we don't really drink or party or mess around with girls or any of that. We find other means of having fun on the road. We're not a normal band. We don't try and be rock stars and do drugs or whatever, but we do have fun.

WHAT KIND OF FUN?
We'll just mess with other bands and pull pranks and do dumb stuff but for the most part I guess you just have to be there to grasp what goes on.

ARE YOU GUY'S STRAIGHT-EDGE? WHAT'S THE DEAL?
No, we're not straight-edge at all. The main reason why we don't do any of that other stuff is because we're all Christians and we pretty much have chosen to live a certain way based on that and not based on the lifestyle of straight-edge. We all respect that belief and that lifestyle and we see eye to eye on a lot of things but none of us in this band consider ourselves straight-edge.

BUT YOU DO FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT YOUR FAITH AND THAT'S COOL.
That's pretty much the main focus on all of our personal lives and on the band. I think it just comes through in a lot of things so if you see things that isn't normal and expected from rock bands then that's the probably the reason why. We don't really have any other ulterior motives driving us to do this.

DO YOU THINK CHRISTIANITY IS UNDER ATTACK THESE DAYS?
Christianity as far as a religion is under attack for what?

IT JUST SEEMS LIKE CHRISTIANITY IN GENERAL IS UNDER ATTACK BY THE WORLD.
Yeah, honestly I can't help to think that's true but that is something that Christianity has brought on to itself to an extent. I feel like if you look in the bible it talks about people running into opposition and face times of struggle and being the odd man out. And if you think about it, Christians should expect some kind of resistance at some point of their life.

RIGHT, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE THOSE WHO'LL GO AGAINST YOU NO MATTER WHAT.
Right...But I think that lately Christianity has taken a role that they're better, you know. Christ came and ate with prostitutes and criminals and hung out with people that other Christians, or people who tried to live righteously, wouldn't have anything to do with because they thought they were better then them. But Christ showed them that we're all the same people and that we all struggle with life. But it seems that Christianity has sort of put itself back into that old mindset and there's not someone like Jesus whose gonna come and show Christians how to act in these days and I people feel like they're not good enough to go to church and that they'll be ridiculed if they do and that's the wrong attitude to have. In turn you have a nation being segregated from the church due to Christians who feel they're better then everyone else. But then we have all these priests molesting kids and it's just sending completely mixed signals to the world.

"DO AS I SAY NOT AS I DO."
Exactly, and we run into that a lot and that's why we're here. Christians have been under attack but I feel like a lot of us it brought on by themselves and they should reevaluate what they're doing and the way they're acting.

HAVE YOU GUYS EVER GOTTEN ANY BACKLASH FROM THE CHURCH FOR THE KIND OF MUSIC YOU MAKE?
Yeah man. I mean not really a lot, but we've seen our opposition and it's something that we're prepared for. Some church's think that we're twisting the word of God and stuff but I think a lot of people in the church are ignorant and they don't understand what we do and they don't grasp what we do and that's okay. We're not out to play for them, we don't want them to like our band. We don't care what they think because we know that what we're doing is God's calling.

JUST MISUNDERSTOOD?
Some churches get what we do and they pray for us and they tell us that we're reaching people that perhaps they couldn't and I think that's awesome. We just feel real confident with what God called us to do in life and once you have the comfort of that then no human, no person, can talk you out of it.

WELL YOU GUYS ARE GETTING THE WORD OUT AND THAT SAYS A LOT.
Thanks man.


Photo By David Stuart

UNDEROATH HAS EVOLVED A LOT THROUGH THE YEARS. THE SOUND, THE BAND, ALMOST EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT THEN IT WAS WHEN THE BAND FIRST BEGAN.

Well people grow and come of age and a lot of stuff changes and you grow in and out of hobbies and you just evolve. Like you have some dudes who just get sick of doing this and that and over the years... It's never been a conscious progressing but a natural change due to that fact that we've had key members who were really metal-based leave and were replaced with others. Before I was in the band everything was really dark and black-metal and then the main songwriter left, [Octavio Fernandez] he wrote all of that metal stuff. Then I came in and took his place and I never played metal in my life [laughs] so, it was just a different flavor and it all kind of happened throughout that change with every member.

YOU ALSO RECENTLY RECRUITED A NEW SINGER.

Yeah and he's got a totally different vibe and things are just naturally progressing and it's really weird because a lot of bands change member so much they have a lot of opposition from fans and a lot of problems and if you change too much then kids will lose interest. But, we've been very blessed and fortunate to the point where we always bring something new to the table and the response we've gotten off this last record is proof that we've beaten the rap of scrutiny.

SEEMS LIKE EVERYTHING JUST FELL INTO PLACE AND HAPPENED FOR A REASON.

It's really weird and it's a good situation. We're just trying to take what we can from it and use it for the right reasons and just do what we need to do and do what we're here to do.

WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED WITH FORMER SINGER, DALLAS TAYLOR? WHY'D HE LEAVE THE BAND?

Man, that was a hard time...We had a lot of hard times in that situation and during that time.

I CAN IMAGINE IT MUST'VE BEEN ROUGH FOR THE BAND.

Yeah, we pretty much weren't a band for a while. Underoath broke up for about a week or so and we really had to all clear our heads and figure out what to do in that situation. It was something that was building up and all the instances and details and stuff isn't my business to say because all parties involved aren't here to explain where they were coming from. But it was a string of instances that happened during a short enough period of time where we really felt that we needed to make a change.

SO DID DALLAS LEAVE OR WAS HE ASKED TO LEAVE?

We weren't about to ask Dallas to leave so pretty much we just broke up. A couple of us quit and were just really confused and stressed and it was our 11th week on the road and were just beat up and couldn't take any more. So, we went home and took about a week to clear our heads and though about things, you know. Then we all met up later that week, all five of us, and we talked about the situation and realized that there was just one thing that was hindering Underoath from doing what it needs to do. We felt that God's will wasn't for us to break up but someone wasn't envisioning what was meant for Underoath at the time then we had to let that one person go. That was the hardest thing we ever had to do and it sucked.

HAVE YOU SPOKEN TO DALLAS SINCE?

I'll tell you, it was really hard for us and Dallas to become friends again, but lately we have. We just seen him again recently and it was awesome. We just knew that he wasn't having fun and wasn't enjoying life on the road and we weren't enjoying life on the road with him but like we all love each other as friends. I mean, he's married now and just bought a house, he plays in a new band and things are going well for him. He's happy with where he's at and we knew he would be so the decision was for the best on everybody's part.

TAKING OVER FOR DALLAS IS SPENCER CHAMBERLAIN. HOW DID SPENCER GET INTO THE PICTURE?

Well, Spencer dates a girl who was roommates with our keyboardist, Chris [Dudley's] girlfriend. So, when we were off tour Chris and Spencer would always hang out and when we needed a singer he was the first person we asked.

EASY AS THAT?

Well, he said no. [Laughs]

WHY?

He just wasn't into playing music anymore and had other plans with his life. But we asked him to play one show with us. We had to do a make-up show in Birmingham, Alabama and it just worked out and clicked. We just played it by ear and slowly but surely things all fell into place. Then he was like, "lets do it," and we started writing and things happened... A year later here we are. God just works stuff out the way he always does.

"Underoath isn't just a band, Underoath is this machine that God has built and assembled with different people over the years and when God's done with Underoath then we'll know and it will be done."

WITH ALL THE MEMBER CHANGES, STYLE CHANGES AND OVERALL GROWTH OF UNDEROATH DID YOU EVER THINK TO MAYBE CHANGE THE BAND'S NAME?
We thought about it. Honestly when we first lost our singer, a year and a half ago, a lot of kids were like, "they're not the same band," and said that we should change our name and this and that. If we were a normal band, then maybe we would have done that. But, we're not a band that is really tagged by a name, you know. To us, Underoath isn't just a band, Underoath is this machine that God has built and assembled with different people over the years and when God's done with Underoath then we'll know and it will be done. People don't make Underoath, it's a vision that is bigger then any group of five or six dudes and bigger then any one person and we all realized that this is what we need to do. God has always provided someone or something to always get us what we need to help us get through any struggle we've ever faced and it's just like every day more and more situations happen where we're reassured that this is what we need to be doing. There just is no reason for Underoath to stop being Underoath unless we lost sight and lost focus of the ministry of Underoath and that's something that I don't see happening ever.

ARE YOU GUYS ALREADY WORKING ON NEW MUSIC?
Yeah, we got three new songs written. We have a lot of stuff brewing, a lot of ideas and it's going good.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM THE NEXT ALBUM?
Dude, it's gonna be pretty heavy, man. It's gonna be really guitar-based, not too many repeat choruses, there's gonna be a lot more vocal change-ups, a lot of screaming, singing, yelling, all combinations. We're really gonna try and do something big with the next record. I think that Chasing Safety is great, it was a record that we wanted to write at the time, but now that we're all more comfortable in our lives and in a different chapter, things are progressing a lot and I just feel that this next record will be the best thing that we've ever written and will ever write. We're stoked, things are coming together.

WHAT DO YOU FORESEE FOR UNDEROATH IN 2005?
Well, we're going on the Taste Of Chaos Tour with The Used, Killswitch Engage and My Chemical Romance and that's gonna be lot's of fun. Then we'll headline in April and May and then do Warped Tour. Our year is all mapped out. Beyond that I just hope that we all keep growing as friends. I mean, we've lost everything from girlfriends to fiancés to band members and family members and we've all been able to get each other through it and beyond being bandmates we're a family and if any of us ever needs anything then we know we'll always be there for each other and I'm really stoked on that. No matter what 2005 throws at us we'll get through it.

www.underoath777.com

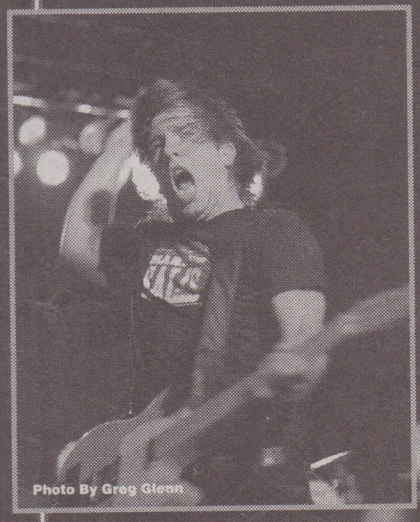


Photo By Greg Glenn

Photo By Greg Glenn

Death From Below

Metal/Hardcore News, Reviews & Interviews By Kirby Unrest

>Headlines

> Californian death-doomsters Morgion have officially split up, according to a statement released by the group's record label, Dark Symphonies. The message reads as follows:
"After a five-year hiatus, a successful tour of Europe in 2003 with the Doomination Tour, and their most successful and critically acclaimed release with 'Cloaked By Ages, Crowned In Earth' (Dark Symphonies), the band have mutually agreed to call it a day. The band members are currently working on separate musical projects, and these will hopefully surface in the near future. It was a pleasure working with the band, and all of us at Dark Symphonies wish Dwayne, Gary, Justin, and Rhett nothing but the very best!"

> Nasum singer/guitarist Mieszko Talarczyk is among the 800 Swedes still missing in Thailand following the massive undersea earthquake measuring 8.7 on the Richter scale and resulting tsunamis along South Asia's coasts. The latest estimates are that over 23,000 have perished in the region.



The remaining members of NASUM have posted the following message on their web site:
"It's very hard for us to make this announcement, but since rumours are already out on the Internet we must make an official statement: Mieszko Talarczyk is missing in Thailand. Mieszko and his girlfriend went to Thailand to spend the holidays. They left a few days before Christmas and were scheduled to return right after New Year's Eve. They were staying in a bungalow at Phi Phi Island and when the big wave came and swept the bungalow away the two were separated. Mieszko's girlfriend is being reported hospitalized 'badly injured' but she has been in contact with among others Mieszko's sister who has been posting an 'I'm looking for...' at the Phuket Disaster Forum. This is everything we know right now. Since we are all shocked by this surreal situation we strongly advise fans of Nasum to respect the anxiety we and the Talarczyk and Thorén families feel at this time, and NOT post questions by email or in the guestbook at Nasum.com. We will post all sorts of news on the website, but again, please respect our wish in this uneasy time. - Sincerely, Anders, Jon and Urban of Nasum."

> Moonspell were invited by long time friends Cradle of Filth to support them on their upcoming European tour all across Europe, from North to South, from East to West, between the end of February and the beginning of April.
Here are the dates:

Feb. 23 (B) Brussel Ancienne Belgique
Feb. 24 (NL) Hardenberg Podium
Feb. 25 (NL) Amsterdam Paradiso
Feb. 26 (D) Köln E-Werk
Feb. 28 (D) Wiesbaden Schlachthof
Mar. 01 (D) Hamburg Docks
Mar. 02 (S) Malmö KB
Mar. 03 (S) Stockholm Arena
Mar. 05 (N) Oslo Rockefeller
Mar. 06 (DK) Kopenhagen Amager Bio
Mar. 10 (H) Budapest Petofi Hall
Mar. 14 (D) Osnabrück Hyde Park
Mar. 15 (D) Berlin Columbiahalle
Mar. 16 (D) Stuttgart Longhorn
Mar. 18 (D) Leipzig Haus Auensee
Mar. 19 (D) München Georg Elser Halle
Mar. 22 5 (I) Milano Rainbow
Mar. 24 (E) Barcelona Sala Apollo
Mar. 25 (E) Bergara Sala Jam
Mar. 26 (P) Porto Coliseum of Porto
Mar. 27 (P) Lisboa Coliseum of Lisboa
Mar. 29 (E) Granata Sala Copea
Mar. 30 (E) Madrid Aqualung
Apr. 02 (F) Paris Elysee Montmartre
Apr. 03 (F) Paris Elysee Montmartre

> According to recent Internet rumors, the forthcoming Spring installment of the Roadrunner Records RoadRage tour is said to feature 3 Inches Of Blood, Still Remains, Trivium and The Agony Scene. Dates and venues are yet to be announced for the March/April trek.



> Madball are currently in the process of writing material for a new full-length. Specifics (label, producer, etc.) haven't yet been disclosed, but the band expects to enter the studio shortly, and release the album later this year. Meanwhile, the group has lined up a few winter shows with Agnostic Front:

2/1 Baltimore MD @ Otto Bar
2/2 Farmingdale NY @ Downtime
2/3 Farmingdale NY @ Downtime w/ Vietnom
2/4 Latham NY @ Saratoga Winners w/ Vietnom
2/5 Providence RI @ Living Room w/ Vietnom
2/6 Sayerville NJ @ Starland Ballroom w/ Vietnom



> The Swedish black metal band Lord Belial is writing new material for their next, yet untitled, album which is set to be released later this year on Regain Records. The musical direction is meant to be a natural developed continuation of "The Seal of Belial". Los Angered Recording Studios will be used for the album, though no date has been set.



> Pre-production for Darkest Hour's next album is underway. The group will enter the studio in late-February to begin recording, which will wrap up in late-March. Devin Townsend (Lamb Of God, Misery Signals) will be producing the album, which should hit stores this summer through Victory Records.

> Now that drummer Lucas McFadden has recovered from the serious injuries he sustained while mountain climbing last Spring, Go It Alone are back in action following eight months of inactivity. The group played a "comeback" show on December 18th and will enter Castle Ultimate Studios in May to record their next album for Rivalry Records.



> Metal Blade Records death metal band Vehemence are currently in search of a new vocalist as longtime frontman Nathan Gearhart has left the group due to family obligations. Here's a statement from the band:

"We now need a powerful frontman to fill his shoes. He will be missed, but at the same time we are excited to have some new blood in the band. We are currently looking for someone who will be fully committed to shows, practices, and tours and must have great stage presence. We DO NOT want a Nathan clone, and would prefer someone who can bring something new to our sound. No matter what 'scene' you are from, if you are an extreme metal vocalist, get in touch! The goal is to expand, and reach a wider audience with our new vocalist."

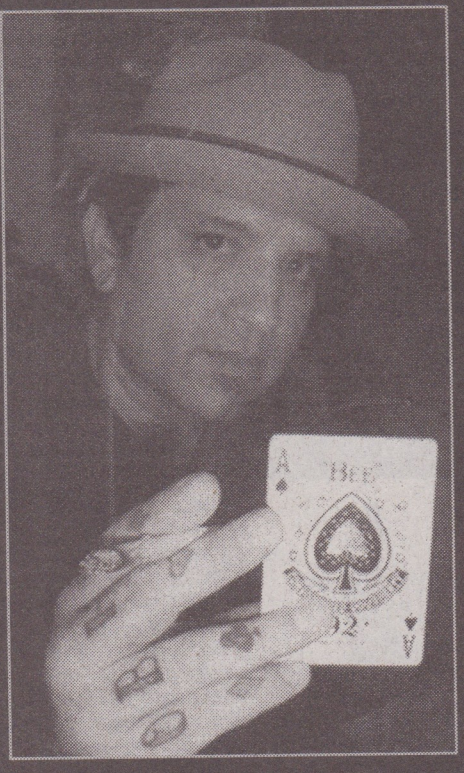
Interested candidates should contact the band: vehemence@vehemence.com

> Since my last installment of "Death From Below," and on the heels of A.J. Cardinals death, more loss was experienced within the California hardcore/metal scene:

A fellow staff member of Rant Magazine (a local Sacramento free music publication), Robert Ward passed away not too long ago. He was a gifted writer and artist, who also did graphic design for Scandanavian culture magazine, Vor Tru. He was quiet, which in turn earned him the nickname "Silent Bob" but he was always a welcome fixture at shows in Sacramento. He will be missed.

Powerhouse bassist and West Coast hardcore stalwart Ernesto "Ernie" Cortez passed away in December following a battle with cancer. I don't think my words are fitting enough so I'm going to let two people put the man best:

To a man who lived a fuller life than many of us, may our prayers and thoughts be with him and his family. He will never be forgotten as he was one of those guys that just lit up a room. He passed away from cancer and left behind many friends all over the world. Please take the time fo r a moment of silence and a final farewell to our friend. He will be greatly missed and always remembered in our hearts. -Pickles MHS/FSU



Ernesto Cortez was a brother to some, a friend to most, and an enemy to a very unfortunate few. A legend in certain circles, there was a gravity to his existence that drew people from around the world to him. He was regarded with respect by friend and foe alike because Ernie effortlessly embodied the greatest and rarest qualities of humanity. He carried himself with dignity, adhering to an old school set of principles that were defined by pride, loyalty, and conviction. All men should carry themselves in such a way that they command the respect and admiration that Ernie did. Even his shortcomings, of which there were many, were endearing, or at least excusable. Ernie Cortez was a great man in a world of men who so often fall short of good. For all his brash bravado and stubbornness, for all the wild nights and street fights, Ernie was a very tender and caring person and, above all else, he was unbelievably giving. He gave of himself to everyone he met; shake his hand and you had his undying loyalty until you did something to no longer deserve it. Ernesto was one of those rare individuals who was defined by the way he treated others; so often he put the needs of his friends and family before his own, whether that meant sliding cash your way to help with rent or throwing one of those thick arms around your shoulders when you were down. When my best friend, Nicky, passed away, Ernie was the first person I called and he insisted I go to his house immediately so that we could talk. In fact, he threatened to beat me down unless I went to his house immediately so that we could talk. I did go, but we didn't talk. We sat at the top of his stairs and said nothing. He offered a few supportive words under his breath, but he knew that what I needed most was to just know that I wasn't alone. And that was Ernie's true purpose in life: to insure that those he loved or who loved him were never alone. He was defined by his unbreakable sense of brotherhood. The zenith of this quality of loyalty was the OBHC Crew; the ragtag troop of boys that, in a lifetime of accomplishment, is most likely Ernie's greatest accomplishment. He provided, against all odds, what so many of us had been denied throughout our lives: a stable family that provided unconditional love (and some remarkably terrible tattoos). Ernie's crew commanded the same respect that Ernie did because he instilled in us the same set of ethics that made him such a revered figure; and though we sometimes fail, we always strive to live up to his example. The despair and disillusionment I feel right now is absolutely indescribable but I am comforted by the fact that so many people have love ad respect for Ernie.So here's to Ernie Powerhouse. The king of Oakland, the godfather of Norcal hardcore, the outlaw saint and founding father of the OBHC Crew, and my beloved carnale. Honor him always. Thanks to all who have shown him respect.

-Sammy The Mick OBHC CREW

Anaal Nathrakh - Domine Non Es Dignus



Season Of Mist Records

Can't tell you the correct pronunciation of their name, but I am more than willing to express my full backing for this band. Incredible, technically minded death metal with touches of black for fans of Nile, Diabolic, Origin and Akercocke. Very unique in many ways, featuring excellent experimentation, sick vocals, furious drumming and intense fretwork. They sample various horror and cult flicks, and interweave eerie, avant-garde noise collages to keep things energetic and interesting. Song writing is first rate, with a solid recording to boot. The groups ability to invoke the atmosphere of various metal genres successfully really sets them apart from the hordes of Death/Morbid Angel/Obituary/Cannibal Corpse clones out there. I just can't say enough good things about Anaal Nathrakh. If you are looking for the very finest in modern brutal death metal, "Domine Non Es Dignus" is a prime starting point...

Dark Throne - Sardonic Wrath



Moonfog Records

When it comes to unadulterated, skull raping black metal, there are few that have perfected the sound where that scene began better than Dark Throne. Their no-nonsense approach, which lacks keyboards, operatic female vocals, and all the trappings many feel have robbed black metal of it's primal nature, gives Dark Throne a powerful reach some may view as being absent for far too long. It's not always my thing, but I can appreciate the hard work and pure passion Fenriz and Nocturno Culto have for their work. Fact is, you just can't argue with some of the material on "Sardonic Wrath." I enjoyed many tracks, even more than ones on their previous effort, "Hate Them." The punishing beats and searing guitars in "Alle Gegen Alle," "Straightening Sharks In Heaven," and "Information Wants To Be Syndicated" pulsate with a demonic glow. Raw, untainted black metal for the devoted...

Thanatos - Undead.Unholy.Divine

Black Lotus Records

One of the longest running cult acts in Europe, Thanatos have been around in various incarnations since 1984. Their latest, "Undead.Unholy.Divine" is a shotgun blast of Satanic death metal coupled with the speed of old school thrash, and it's quite the potent combo. Though far from daringly original, it's definitely respectable for how true Thanatos stays to their roots. Never do they get bogged down in what's popular now, which remains their most noble attribute and the sole hindrance to further greatness. Cuts like "Lambs To The Slaughter," "Godforsaken," "Beyond Terror," "Servants Of Hatred" and the title track are all gold, but the shine is not as bright as it could be, since they remain formulaic. I dig Thanatos and if you like thrashy death metal, you will too but if you are expecting something earth shattering, you may be disappointed with "Undead.Unholy.Divine."

Symphony In Peril - Whore's Trophy



Facedown Records

Wow. I have no idea what happened to this band, but they went from a math metal outfit with minor mosh breaks to an all out metalcore assault, and it's awesome. Don't let the opening acoustic chords deceive you; dancefloor mayhem is forthcoming. Symphony Of Peril still play with perfectionist skill and technical grace, but the heaping portions of two step parts and stellar chugga chugga breakdowns have improved their sound tenfold. Not saying they weren't good before, but their newer material really impressed me. "For Now We See In A Mirror, Dimly, But Then Face To Face," "Stiletto," "Revolving Door Romance" and "The Whore's Trophy Parts I & II" are going to have more fists flying than a Jet Li movie. Lyrically, it's the standard issue stuff, but a couple of great lines emerge. Layout is kind of cheesy, though it's nothing too bad. The recording, courtesy of Eric Rachel @ Trax East, is top notch. Everything about Symphony In Peril has been stepped up. Vocalist Shawn Jonas has never sounded better, guitarists Joshua Aronovsky and Andy Reale are near symbiotic, drummer Colin Simula tears it up, and bassist Andy Richards runs the low end perfectly. If you are looking for a moshtastic way to start off the New Year, get out your dancing shoes and put this one on...

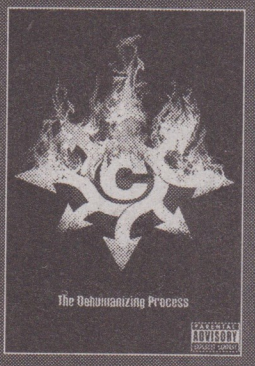
Monsters Of Metal Vols. 1 & 2 DVD



Nuclear Blast Records

These are a couple of essential DVD's for metal fans everywhere right here. Together they contain more than a hundred videos, plus tons of bonus live clips, studio reports, and audio tracks. Many of these videos are from bands outside of the U.S. and were/are rarely seen on American television, culled from the vaults of 80's, 90's and Millenium era metal. From the greats such as Exodus, Kreator, Iced Earth, Napalm Death and Bolt Thrower to current favorites like Arch Enemy, Children Of Bodom, Cradle Of Filth and Lacuna Coil. Some of the videos are absolutely hilarious, both of the Rhapsody videos are perfect examples, while others are immense artistic achievements like "Light The Torch" from Soilwork, which remains one of my favorite pieces of all time. Jam-packed with lots of classics, and brimming with goodies, Monsters Of Metal Vols. 1 & 2 are definitely worth the cost and come highly recommended.

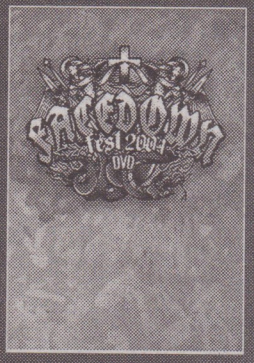
Chimaira - The Dehumanizing Process DVD



Roadrunner Records

I've never been a huge Chimaira fan. Their first disc on East Coast Empire, "This Present Darkness" had it's fair share of impressive features, but their debut on Roadrunner left a lot to be desired, and in all honesty, I still liked their former act, Ascension, a lot more. Slowly but surely though this band won a place back in my musical collection with their latest releases, and especially with this DVD, a documentary that traces their entire history, through all the trials, tribulations and triumphs. "The Dehumanizing Process" showcases the rough and tumble life of an up and coming band whose been in that state for more than five years and the tough times that result from being so close to "making it" but falling short. Internal conflicts, member changes, and complete and utter breakdowns checker their existence and make it difficult to carry on, but somehow the band is able to, and there were more than a couple times I found myself rooting for the band out loud. There are plenty of people out there who think the music business is a free ride, but Chimaira show that it's a beast as vicious and multi-faced as the mythical creature that is their namesake. Through all the struggles, the band endures and truly grows, ending up with a sound that is heavy, but accessible. My respect for Chimaira, musically and personally, has definitely grown by leaps and bounds, and after viewing "The Dehumanizing Process," you are sure to change your tune about this talented band...

Facedown Fest 2004 DVD



Facedown Records

After the audio quality challenged Facedown Fest 2003 DVD, I wasn't expecting a huge amount from this installment; was I ever mistaken. This venture from Facedown Records has been stepped up in every way. Sound, picture, roster, everything just falls into place perfectly. Recorded over two nights, this DVD features the last ever XDiscipleX A.D. show, the return of No Innocent Victim, as well as performances from Hit The Deck, A Love For Enemies, Sinai Beach, Seventh Star, Bloody Sunday, Hanover Saints, Nodes of Ranvier, Shockwave (their first West Coast appearance!) and the almighty Comeback Kid, as well as many, many more. Interviews are included with bands and fans, and it lends a great personal touch. The sound is stunning, with beautiful, crisp picture (multi angle) and a packaging job that more record labels should model their DVD releases after. There are also a lot more songs from each band, with every act getting at least two tracks, and some groups offering up six tracks. Facedown delivers once again. I don't really no what else to say but pick it up...now.

An Interview With
3 Inches Of Blood



Hailing from the Great White North, 3 Inches Of Blood are bringing back the glory days of heavy metal with hints of hardcore, punk and straight forward rock and winning over entire venues in the process. I recently talked to vocalist Cam Pipes and bassist Brian Redman while they were on the road (which is pretty much all the time) about their history, fans, Dungeons and Dragons, lightning striking their studio, and why they hate Orcs so very, very much.

Could you offer up a brief outline of the bands history?
Cam- Alright. The band started about five years ago in Victoria. I joined about a year after they started playing. I've been in the band now for about 3 1/2 years now. We've done a bunch of tours, we got a killer new line up and two records out, the latest of which is on Roadrunner. That's pretty much it.

I know you've had a few line up changes. Has that hindered your touring/writing schedules at all?
Cam- Not really. It's delayed a little bit. It hasn't hindered the quality of our records or live shows or anything like that. I think we are all on the same page right now. Line up changes are unfortunate sometime and can really set you back, but I think we've handled it well. There is always the potential for relationships to sour…
Brian- It could have been really strange, but it's worked out fine.
Cam- The new guys are great, their eager and talented and we're all in the same boat together.

Cam, how often do you get asked if Pipes is your real last name?
Brian- laughs
Cam- The first time that happened was actually our manager who didn't believe it was my real last name. So I was like, here's my drivers license, check it out.
Brian- I just had this conversation like an hour ago at a bank. The lady was like, "Is that his real last name?"
Cam- It's strange. I know it's not a common last name, but I never really thought of how good it must sound as a vocalists name.
Brian- Dude, you were born to rock.
(everyone laughs)

What is the songwriting process like? Having two vocalists, how do you decide who sings what part?
Cam- Well in the past, the guitar players wrote the bulk of the music, riffs and melody ideas. Jamie (Hooper, vocals) and I are the lyricists. As soon as the music is in place, Jamie and I kind of map out, with the aid of a rehearsal tape, where the song is going and how we are going to arrange our vocals.

Brian, coming from Trial, Lahar, and Left With Nothing, bands who primarily played the hardcore scene, how was the transition into the metal community?
Brian- I'm really enjoying it. The change of pace has been great. Trial, Lahar and LWN were all pretty aggressive bands, and so it's not hugely different in some aspects, but I think it's a bit more musically challenging, and really fun to just rock out.

You guys have a pretty diverse and devoted following, drawing fans from the metal, hardcore, and punk scenes. What/why do you think so many different kinds of people find in common with your sound?
Cam- Well I think we've just played a lot of different kinds of shows. When we started playing around our hometown. We'd play in front of anyone. The "metal scene" In Vancouver didn't seem too into our stuff, or didn't like our approach, for whatever reason it seems, so we'd just play hardcore and punk shows, just because we wanted to play. It's a combination of that and the fact that a lot of kids got into metal when they were younger and their musical tastes changed. Yet, we are kind of a throwback for them and remind me them of why they liked heavy metal in the first place and are getting back into it.

You re-recorded "Destroy the Orcs" from your "Battlecry Under A Wintersun" record on the latest 3IOB release, "Advance and Vanquish." Any plans to re-record more songs from "Battlecry" or perhaps the entire record?
Cam- We did re-record "Ride, Dark Horse Ride" during the "Advance and Vanquish" sessions, but it didn't make it onto that album. It may turn up as a B-side or bonus track somewhere down the line. As far as anything else being re-recorded, there really hasn't been any discussions about it.

Speaking of the resurgence in metal, there is a growing movement of newer bands the media have dubbed "The New Wave Of American Heavy Metal" and concern has been expressed that this is all just a marketing tool and corrupts the integrity of metal. What are your thoughts?
Brian- Well there are some sourface motherfuckers out there that don't want to accept it, because they are living in the '80s. There definitely is a new wave coming around and I think it's completely legitimate and I am proud to be a part of it. Music is always going to change and evolve, but there is also going to be regression to the roots, an appreciation and practice of that. We get compared to a lot of traditional heavy metal bands and we're cool with that. You see a lot of groups out there doing the garage rock thing, straight ahead rock and roll and that's cool too. I think it's awesome that people are getting back to what they were into when they were younger.
Cam- It's a familiar story when a band who has a grassroots following achieves any sort of success or exposure, there is going to be backlash and you just have to learn that you can't please everyone. All you can do is ignore it and appreciate the fans that you've got.
Brian- Totally.

One of the many catchy elements of "Advance and Vanquish" is the cover. Who is the artist, and how did you get hooked up with them? Did you contribute your ideas for the design?
(Brian and Cam laugh)
Cam- I wish you could have seen the final preliminary sketch. It was amazing.
Brian- Wasn't it Jamie who did it?
Cam- Yeah, Jamie did it.
Brian- I think it was on a pizza box or some shit.
Cam- I actually saw the originals Jamie did a couple days ago. Pretty amazing. Yeah, we got hooked up with Ed Repka who totally impressed us with his ideas and the final product.

A lot of metal bands that have fantasy themes get tagged with the title "Dungeons and Dragons" metal. You are one of those

groups who incorporate lyrics of the like into your sound, to have a storytelling element. Was that your goal lyrically for the band? Did anyone in 310B actually ever play D&D?
Cam- Definitely our goal. Jamie and I write lyrics that have a storytelling style. It's really fun to do those kind of songs.
Brian- Yeah. It's definitely a lot more fun that some song about crying because your g/f left you.
Cam- We are just out to have fun. As for the D&D question, I didn't play it growing up, but now we do on occasion. Jamie did when he was a kid. We immerse ourselves in the gaming world these days.

Good lyrical material?
Cam- Yeah, it should be. Contrary to popular belief, we really haven't written anything inspired by D&D or the gaming word at this point, but possibly in the future that content will emerge.

Is "Advance and Vanquish" a theme album?
Cam- The "Upon The Boiling Sea" tracks were meant to be a three part epic, but the rest of the album...I'm sure you can find some unifying themes but it wasn't intended as a concept record.

Some people don't like metal lyrics because many rely on subjects that are far from reality. Do you ever integrate more personal issues or politics into your lyrics under the guise of something more far fetched?
Brian- Pretty much, we just hate Orcs.
Cam- Yeah. That's our political stance. (laughs)

I remember reading that the studio you recorded "Advance" in got struck by lightning. Was anyone hurt?
(Brian laughs)
Cam- Well, not the building itself. That's a bit of an embellishment on some PR persons part. There was a rainstorm going on and the board was fried. Lighting struck about a block away from the studio, and it blew some transistors, so it blew the mixing board. No major damage though. It was pretty awesome to watch the storm.

An Interview With SOS

Name/age/band duties: Jason Barrow/I turned 22 today/singer.

Can you offer up some of the history behind SOS?
Sure, once we were sick of playing as Crunch Time, our singer C.L. Black had the idea of starting a new band. The band was to be called SOS. We were going to record a three song SOS demo and circulate them on the Curnch Time/Mental/Desperate Measures "Dirty South Tour". SOS was going to be influenced by two things: the song SOS by Warzone, and the solo at the end of Seekers of the Truth by the Cro-Mags. Eric Lomon ended up writing three songs and recording the guitar for them. He even added computer generated drum tracks, but there just wasn't enough time to record the real demo before Crunch Time tour. These three songs still exist in .mp3 format somewhere, they are as 'guido mosh' as it gets. So by the end of that summer Crunch Time had broken up, and C.L. Black was at school, we had no real interest in still doing that SOS demo. In comes Greg Willmott, Lockin' Out Records CEO. Greg had been talking a lot about doing a Lockin' Out comp and it was starting to actually come together. Originally the record was going to be called "Lockin' Out: The Way It Is", but Greg eventually thought it was too ridiculous and named the record "Sweet Vision". Half serious, half jokingly we would talk about how great it would be for SOS to have a song on the comp. C.L. Black was at school in NH, it was just me and Lomon in Boston. I said, how about I sing and Lomon and me will write and record a SOS song for the comp. We ended up writing and recording a song for the comp called "Here My Troubles Began." The comp ended up being a 7" and first showed listeners such classics as Righteous Jams' "Iron Mind" and The Wrongside's "Hangman's Noose". The comp is sold out now but you can always download the mp3s. This bring us to last winter, Greg says that if we write and record a SOS demo, he will put it out. Keep in mind, the band at this point is still just Lomon and myself. We end up writing four songs, and recording them along with a Smashing Pumpkins cover at Lomon Studios. I sang, Lomon played drums, guitar, and most of the bass parts on that demo. Joe Lacey, who plays bass in Outbreak, actually played bass on a couple songs on the demo. The demo came out and we played our first show Febuary last year. I still have a piece of wood from the stage from our first show that Kenny from Look Alive built. We ended up getting our roommate Dookie, from Mental, to play drums, and our friend Texas Mike to play bass so we could play some shows. We ended up playing a handful of shows on that demo before Lomon and me got completely sick of the songs. Pretty soon we started writing songs for an EP. We wrote a bunch of songs and started recording them right away, once again at Lomon Studios. The EP was originally going to come out on Lockin' Out, but Mental was touring that entire summer, so if Greg was going to put the record out, we were going to have to wait. In comes Perfect Victim. I told Mike how SOS is recording an EP and how we want to get it out as soon as possible, but Greg's going to be on tour all summer. We gave him a tape of a rough cut from the EP, and he agreed that he would put it out. Out of the songs we wrote and recorded we ended up keeping six of them for the EP. The EP came out, Mike did a great job with it, and we ended up touring on it with our friends Have Heart. Unfortunately on the tour we ended up losing our van, our merch, some gear, and an unbelievable amount of money, but that is another story.

What does the name stand for?
The name doesn't stand for anything. We liked the song SOS by Warzone so much that we named out band after it. The lyrics in our song "We Drown Because We Can" go "Save Our Souls", so if you had to make it stand for something, you can say that.

You've got members from Suicide File and Crunch Time. How have those bands influenced the sound of SOS?
I always read reviews of our record that say we have ex-members of Suicide File, I don't know who these members are. One time I picked up the mic after Dave broke it and jumped in front of him pretending I was singing with it, maybe that's what people mean. As for Crunch Time, most of the Crunch Time songs were written by me making guitar sounds with my mouth then Lomon playing it on guitar, that's also how the SOS songs were written. I wouldn't say that Crunch Time influenced SOS at all though. Crunch Time was Sports-Core, SOS is just a rock band.

Speaking of your sound, SOS definitely has many unique qualities to that dimension of the band. It's far from mosh driven, but has a lot of power and passion, while also be accessible/danceable for many different kids of kids. Was that one of your goals when you started SOS?
I suppose that was one of our goals. We didn't want kids moshing to us, and there isn't one mosh part in any of our songs. We wanted parts that were fun for us to play, and parts that people could pull some good stagedives while listening to.

Break up rumors have encircled the band over the last month or so. For such a young group, what spurred this gossip and is there any truth to it?
Our website said that we were working on a new EP and we posted a new mp3 from that EP, a day later the website said that we had broken up. Publicity stunt? Maybe. Believe whatever you want to believe, we don't really care, but believe me when I say that the Crunch Time "Catch The Blast of a Hype Verse" EP and the second SOS EP will be coming out.

The artwork is definitely far from the average stuff you see on Perfect Victim and with hardcore records in general. Why did you choose the unicorn, and soft, warm tones?
The artwork was done by Anthony Pappalardo (Get Down, In My Eyes, Ten Yard Fight, etc). We told Anthony to go off and make something wild. Funny you should say warm tones because Anthony came back to us and said, "I'm thinking mystical animals and warm colors." We loved the idea of that, and we ended up with a record cover of a unicorn with tendrils of smoke.

How did you get hooked up with Mike and Perfect Victim?
I've known Mike for a few years now. Mental Crew was always a big fan of Mike ever since he had a mustache at the Mental record release show for their "And You Know This" record. We also spoke very highly of the "Melillo Jig", a dance move that he created and that no one has been able to duplicate since. We are both very interested in web programming and nerd stuff like that, and we sold t-shirts together outside the Fleet Center and Fenway.

Any plans for a full length?
We plan on putting out our second EP, and then definitely moving on to a full length.

National touring?
It's a possibility but I would not count on it. We will be making the money that we lost on our first tour for the rest of this band's career.

What do you focus on in your lyrics?
I try to write my lyrics in a way that they mean something special to me, but are written so other people can also find meaning. For example, "The Block and the Rail" is really about hawking t-shirts, but when we play it people still sing-along because they the lyrics "We do this every night!" could really be about anything.

Thoughts on the current state of Boston hardcore?
Although we don't have the big shows nearly every weekend like we once had, I would still say Boston hardcore is as healthy as ever due to all the incredible bands. As long as Righteous Jams is still a band, Boston will have a great hardcore scene. Mental has been playing shows nearly every weekend somewhere for the past three years, and the new Mind Eraser LP is awesome. The only thing Boston lacks right now is a venue, but the guys at

Romans in Brockton, MA have that covered, they put on a hardcore show almost every Friday night.

Most disgusting venue you've ever played?
The most disgusting venue I ever played was when I sang in a band called Dereliction. I was 16 years old and we played a bar called The Tank. The show was with Unearth, they were also pretty young at the time. The place was a complete dive, and it seemed about a thousand times more disgusting when you're only 16.

Best movie of 2004?
Saw. I found this movie to be incredible, everyone see it on DVD when it comes out.

Who is your favorite comic book character and why?
Honestly, the only comic book I have ever read (if you consider it a comic book) is Maus 1 and 2 by Art Spiegelman. I guess I was collecting magic cards when everyone else was collecting issues of Spiderman and Venom.

Final words?
Shoot outs to all my friends who play Halo 2 on Xbox live, especially X3MTA3, C M4N ACE, TAR R3VIR, ZEUSISAPIMP, GODOFGODCLAN, and the entire UberHomeDawgz clan. ↖

An Interview With Shere Khan



Boston keeps churning out one great band after another. Shere Khan is one such example of this quality lineage, with their brand of old school straight edge hardcore that will having you moving in no time. Jonathan (vocals), Mike (guitar) and Wheeler (guitar) answer questions about sharing members with On Broken Wings, producer Ken Susi, the edge, FSU, Rock Vegas and why they took their name from a "Jungle Book Character."

What is your name/position in the band and where are you from?
This is Jonathan vocals, from Plymouth to Hull, to Nowhere in particular. Mike, guitar, from Cohasset. Wheeler, guitar, from Hull to Cambridge, to Nowhere in particular.

When/how did Shere Khan form?
I dunno when-a year ago. We wanted to be in a straight edge band. We played in our friends basement, never any shows. We got more people in the band, we changed who did what, and when it sounded good we recorded a demo and put it out.

You share members with On Broken Wings correct? How do you balance out the schedules with both bands?
Jonathan and Mike are in OBW, and Wheeler is now in Black My Heart as well. Pretty much we do OBW when it needs to be done, we tour for a month or so at a time, and do Shere Khan for the 2 or so months we're home between tours. SK has no plans to tour extensively as of now, but we would all love to once JD (bass) gets out of high school and we all have the time.

Obviously the name comes from the character in the "Jungle Book," which I think is pretty awesome. You don't see to many bands take their names from Disney Films. Any particular reason you chose it?
He's a tiger, and tigers are cool, ha, ha, ha.... Plus he's the villain of the story, and all he really wants to do is kill a human cuz' they have the reputation of killing and hunting his friends and burning down his home.

I dig you guys because your sound is fairly unique these days. It's not completely youth crew, or old school, and it's definitely far from modern metalcore. It's just aggressive, to the point, with dance parts in all the right spots, as well as some melodic edges solid grooves. Was that the style you intended to have since the beginning?
We just wrote music, and it just came out really raw and aggressive.

Is straight edge a focal point of Shere Khan as a band? What are your thoughts on the straight edge these days?
We are a straight edge band but it is NOT the focal point of the band. We have some straight edge songs but that is not all we are about. We are a band singing about what we care about and what we feel, and straight edge happens to be one of those things.

What was it like working with Ken Susi (Unearth guitarist/uberproducer)?
It was great, he is an awesome guy, and very UBER !!!!!

In the liner notes to "Get Fucked," it states that the record was recorded during "the worst winter in 50 years." Exactly how bad was the weather and did it hinder the recording process at all?
I dunno man, it was kind of a joke (it was freezing though). I think it did snow the two days we were there though cuz' the bottom of my pants got wet and I had to record in my boxers.

I love the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles sample at the beginning of the title track. I know one or two other bands who've utilized it, but I'm always surprised more haven't. Such a great clip. Were you big into TMNT growing up?
What's Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles ?

Coming from Boston, what do you think about all the controversy surrounding the "Boston Beatdown" DVD, as well as the increased mainstream media scrutiny and police crackdowns it's brought with it? Do you think it's justified? I've read that FSU members and individuals wearing Boston Beatdown shirts getting arrested for no reason at all, except for their clothing. Any truth to these claims?
A lot of that stuff is bullshit. It seems the cops are mad cuz' they feel someone is trying to make them look foolish. FSU polices the scene in Boston, they work security at shows, and they definitely don't beat kids up for no reason at all like the media would like you to believe. I have been going to shows since the late 90's and this stuff has been going on since way before that, it 's just that now their is a dvd out everybody is going crazy over it. Anybody can stand on Lansdowne St. on a Saturday night with a video camera and get footage of people getting into fights, the cops just want to blame everything on them. There are stabbings and beatdowns at hip hop clubs all the time and you don't see every kid wearing a Wu Tang shirt getting arrested, it has GOTTEN OUT OF HAND. BBD is a documentary, not just a fight video like the media would like you to believe.

Are you guys planning on doing a full length and will it be released through Rock Vegas?
We have no plans on doing a full length right now cuz' we are still selling our e.p. But we will be doing a split 7" and be doing some songs for a comp, both releases will be on Rock Vegas. We have no interest doing anything with other labels right now cuz' those dudes treat us so good. They are a label that supports their bands, they don't just go after what is hot right now.

When are you coming out to the West Coast?
We will come to the West Coast as soon as Hoods will tour with us, ha, ha, ha. If somebody books a Cali. tour we will do it. Check us out at - www.xsherekhanx.com or www.missionrockland.com. ↖

An Interview With
Life Long Tragedy



Straight outta the Bay Area, Life Long Tragedy, are quite simply one of the best bands you'll ever hear in metallic hardcore. Their latest, "Destined For Anything" rarely to never leaves my CD player. It's just…beyond words. Yet, brothers Scott and RJ Phillips (vocals and guitar respectively) took some time to try and describe their sound, views and the experiences that have shaped them as a band. Enjoy…

Alright, let's start off with a timeline of Life Long Tragedy, whose all involved then and now, and what have you've been up to as of late?

Scott: We were really young and just wanted to start a hardcore band. There was, for the most part, no hardcore kids or bands from our area of the bay. We started from scratch and didn't have much musical direction or intentions as a band. I was a freshmen in high school and was just in love with the passion, honesty, and energy in the music. That was basically it. I wanted to put out a demo, and maybe if we were lucky, get on some shows and meet people involved in this community. After a bad demo, some worse shows, and a few lineup changes, we were set with a really special group that we still have today: Jery, Cody, Jason, RJ, and myself. We're all pretty different dudes with different musical backgrounds but together things always flowed great and felt right. Starting off we just wanted to get our name out locally, meet other bands, and play as much as possible. Whenever or wherever, which we often did. Then came the "A Sealed Fate" EP which at the time was a huge progression musically for us. It was heavier and harder, but there was still definitely something missing. We toured the US for the first time and had a fucking blast doing so. Being 3000 miles from home with your best friends was an incredible feeling, whether the shows were shitty or not. But we knew we were capable of more musically. We wanted to write a really cohesive LP that we were truly happy with. Which we did. "Destined for Anything" is the result of taking our time to write and record the type of record we knew we had in us all along. A few months after recording we signed with This Blessing, This Curse recordings who we think have done a great job with it so far. Lately, we've just been playing shows in support of the record, all of which have been very successful. It's funny to think we've been doing this for 3 years now.

RJ: When we first stated practicing it was Scott on vocals, Jason on drums, Brad on bass, and myself on guitar. Like Scott said, we were all really young. Jason and I were 16, Scott was 14. This was everyone's first real band and it definitely showed. A few months after recording our first demo, we met Cody and added him on bass, and Brad moved to second guitar. After Brad was asked to leave the band we added Jery on guitar, who I had played with previously in another band. Everything has clicked so well with this lineup, it's perfect. I think we have come a long way over the past three years.

You guys started off as much more of a metalcore band, and now have moved into a sound akin to Modern Life Is War, Path Of Resistance, Unbroken, and Chokehold. What inspired this change? Do you consider LLT to be a hardcore band, youth crew, rock, metal, all of the above?

Scott: It's just natural progression. Everyone has grown so much musically in the past couple years, as I know I have lyrically. We're never like "Dude, we need to sound like this band or do this and that". Obviously there are bands that have influenced us but it's never our intention to become a clone of those influences. We're all inspired by so many different types of music, and I think it's quite apparent on the newest record. To me, hardcore is hardcore. There are so many classifications and sub-genres going around right now and it's pretty ridiculous. We are a hardcore band and we take influence from everything that inspires us, whether it's hardcore or something else. I'll leave it to everyone else to classify us and whatnot. We are what we are and I'm fine with that.

RJ: Exactly, it was a natural progression. We've made leaps and bounds musically over the past few years. Everyone has gotten older, everyone has matured and we are writing now the best songs we have ever written. LLT is a hardcore band. We are all inspired by different things but when it comes down to it we have come from the hardcore scene and that will always be a part of us.

As a relatively young band, both in literal age and years of LLT's existence, you certainly have accomplished a lot. What have been the deciding factors that drove you onward?

Scott: We all love doing this band so it's never even been an issue of trying to push forward or achieve certain accomplishments. We've never shot for anything except to write songs we were happy with and have a good time. As things have progressed, we've began taking things more seriously, but at the end of the day, we just do this because we love it. The fact that we're all somewhat young has been a benefit. I don't want to be working some dead end job when I'm 30 thinking "Fuck, I wish I would have done this when I was younger". Who knows how much longer we'll have these chances to play in bands and go on tours before we get caught up in "the real world". I don't want to look back on these years and regret things I could have done or should have done. We'll never get these chances again.

RJ: Age I think at first was kind of a limiting factor for us. We weren't experienced in writing songs, playing shows, recording, and every aspect of being in a band. Like Scott said we all share a love of music though and that is what has driven us to keep playing. As we've gotten older we've been on two U.S. tours, we've played hundreds of shows, and we've recorded an LP we're all proud of. We've experienced and gone through a lot as a band, especially considering our age. I think it's pretty rad to say at 19 I've seen almost the entire country playing in a hardcore band and I've met people from all over the world. That's definitely a cool thing.

You recently released "Destined For Anything," an album some have called not only your finest work, but the best hardcore record in a damn long time. I'd have to agree. It's amazing. I know you guys put a lot of effort, blood, sweat and tears into this record. Why did you choose Blessed/Cursed to release it, what was the recording process like, and what are your favorite tracks?

Scott: I met Garth from This Blessing, This Curse on the east coast last summer and he said he was interested in hearing the record. A few weeks later I sent him a copy and he expressed interest in putting it out. At the time we really didn't have any options with other labels so it was a pretty easy decision to go with TBTC. I'm really fucking happy with how everything worked out. Garth is a really sincere dude and has done a lot for us so far. This Blessing, This Curse is a fairly unknown label and we're a fairly unknown band, so if the record was successful it would work in advantage for both of us in getting our names out. The recording process for this record was pretty chaotic as it usually is for bands with low budgets trying to make it as good as possible in a short amount of time. It was stressful but absoluely worth it in the end. We are all so proud of how the final product came out and it's such an amazing feeling to finally hold it in your hands. It's hard to describe. My favorite song on "Destined for Anything" is the last track, "Time Stands Still". Lyrically, it deals with the confusion, desperation, and anxiety of growing up searching for your place in a world where you're not sure if you even have one. I think so many people can relate with that uncertainty in their lives where they're not exactly sure where they're going and not exactly sure how to figure it out. That song really means a lot to me.

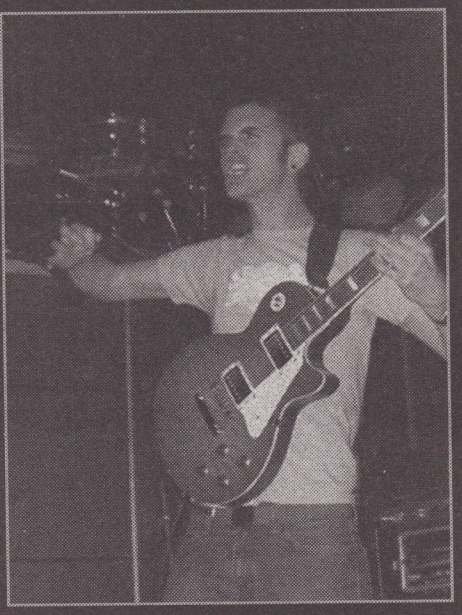
RJ: Recording is always hectic, trying to get everything as good as it can possibly be in three

days is extremely stressful. We all put a lot into this record and I hope that people can hear that when they listen to it. My favorite tracks are "Time Stands Still" and "This Feels Right." I think those are actually the last two songs we wrote for the record.

You toured the U.S. not too long ago. How did that experience shape this band?
Scott: The tour in itself was a disaster. Some of the shows were a lot of fun but our personal relationships really suffered. At one point there were 9 of us between LLT and These Days all living out of the same shitty van. It wasn't a good experience and tensions were high. I know I said a lot of really terrible things to some of my best friends. We ended the tour on horrible terms and didn't communicate with each other for a few weeks. I didn't know if we could repair the damage and continue doing this band, which emotionally killed me inside. We worked through it though and because of that we are a stronger group than ever. I'm fortunate to have such amazing friends in this band that are so understanding of personal circumstances and decisions. That tour is something that I wouldn't mind forgetting. But it was a learning experience and I've grown as a person because of it, as cliche' as that sounds.
RJ: I was in denial when we got home that the tour was rad, but it really wasn't. Yes we did have some fun times, we played some great shows and met a lot of awesome people, but our relations not only as a band but as friends were completely fucked. I don't think a lot of people realize this but we came about as close to breaking up as a band can without actually going through with it. The three months we took off when we got home was just so we as people could get our shit together, and realize that we as people had all changed. And hopefully whenever we decided it was time to play again that we could all work out our differences and be friends again. I was completely fucking terrified I was going to lose my best friends and a band that has been such a huge part of my life for the past three years. Eventually there just came a point where we couldn't fucking stand not playing anymore. We sat down and talked, we started practicing again. Everything clicked like before. That tour almost killed us but I don't regret doing it. We all grew from the experience.

One thing that has always been incredible about LLT is your live performances. I've heard a few people say they weren't huge fans of the music, but that you were the best live band they'd seen. You really do put your all into it. Was placing a strong emphasis on your live show something you had embraced since day one?
Scott: Playing live is just an amazing emotional outlet. The stress and bullshit of everyday life can build up through the week and there is no greater feeling than Friday or Saturday night coming around to lose yourself in the songs for 20 to 30 minutes. It's such a great release. I like to think that we're a fun band to watch. Whether we're playing in front of a few kids or a packed room, we'll give it all we've got.
RJ: I'm really self-conscious, so at first playing live for me was really hard. I was a stuck on that stage and everyone's eyes were on me, so those first shows were rough. I guess eventually I just got used to it and something snapped and I lost my shit. I don't think it was something we consciously set out to do. When we get together on stage it just happens. It's definitely the best emotional release I know. Now I could really care less if I'm in front of 10 kids or 400, the same release happens every time and I think that's true for everyone else in the band as well.

From your demo, to "A Sealed Fate", to "Destined," LLT has definitely grown lyrically. Is that simply due to facing more challenges as you've aged and then writing about them, or a more concentrated effort into that aspect of the band?
Scott: A little bit of both. I've really grown up a lot these last few years and lyrically I have so much more to say than I did when we were first starting out. I write a lot and definitely make sure I'm satisfied with the messages I'm trying to convey through my lyrics. It's just as important as the music and every other aspect of the band. If you don't have anything to say there's really no fucking point in being in a band. Some songs are more personal than others but I do take pride in what this band represents message-wise and lyrically.



You share members with several Northern California groups, including Sabertooth Zombie, These Days and Allegiance. Has it been difficult to schedule LLT around so many other obligations? Do you feel it's hindered your progress as a band or improved upon it?
RJ: I haven't found it hard to schedule LLT around other bands. I recently joined Allegiance and I played in These Days. Jason is also in These Days, Sabertooth Zombie, and The Mourning Dawn. Cody sings in Sabertooth Zombie and plays bass in Days To Streaks and Jery also has a new band going called Steel Trap. I think the main thing that makes it work for us is that for the most part all of our bands practice in the same space. So practicing isn't a big deal, and none of our other commitments hinder the amount of time LLT spends practicing. For shows, things get a bit more complicated but none of the other bands we're in have ever taken away any show from LLT. It does get a bit ridiculous sometimes with playing two shows in two different bands in one night but we make it work. I don't think it's hindered us as a band at all. We've never missed an show because someone else had a show in one of their other bands and we don't intend to. LLT takes priority.

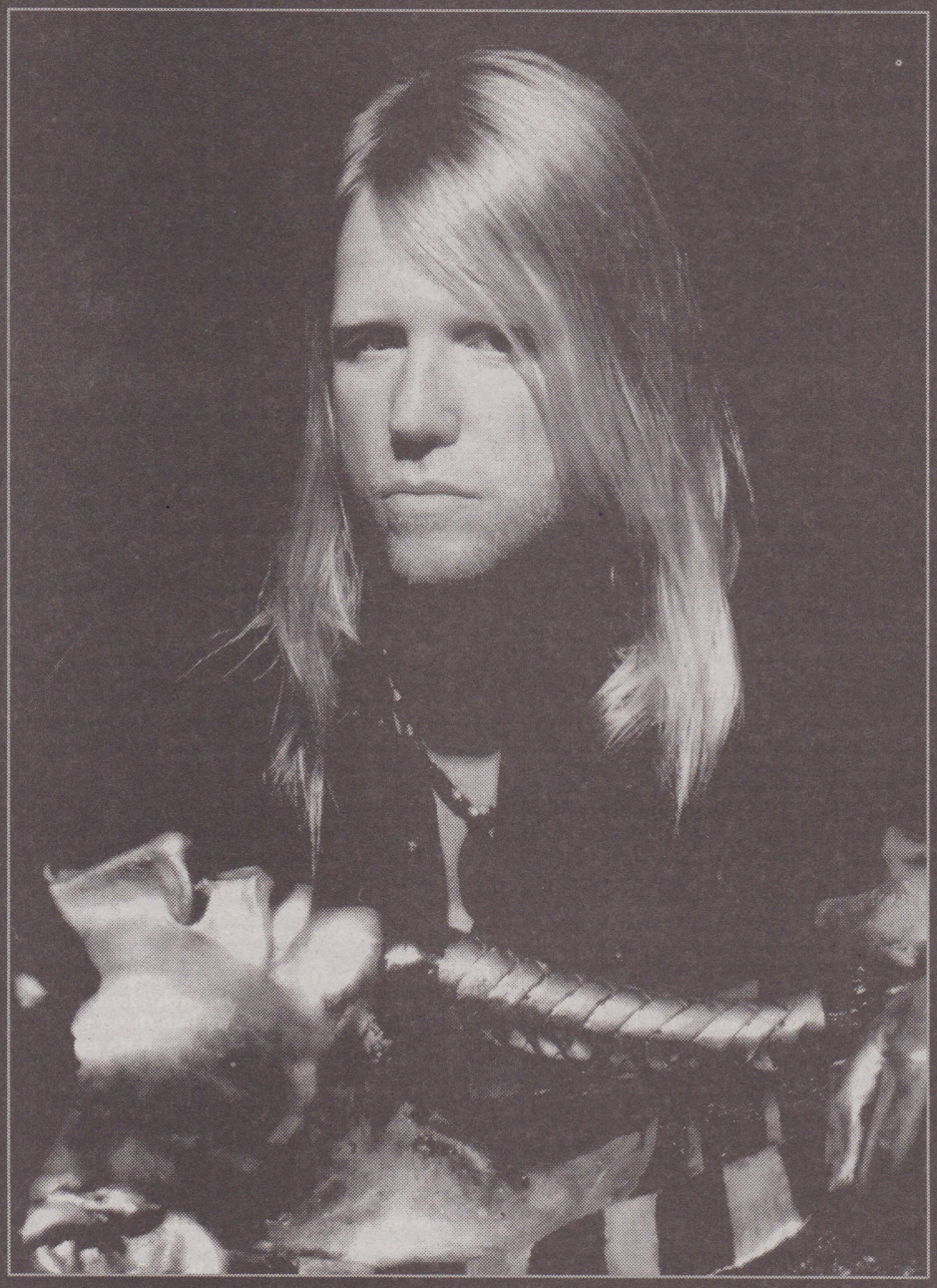
Jery and Scott, you were also involved in the short lived, but fanatically followed xDuckHuntx. Do you ever get frustrated at the fact that a band that was around for less than a year received more hype than LLT, who've been going for over three years? How do you respond to all the constant requests for reunions, etc?I heard some guy actually wanted to fly xDuckHuntx out to Tennessee to play a single show. Blows my mind. Hahaha. What are your thoughts?
Scott: Looking back, I have a love/hate relationship with being in that band. On one side it was a lot of fun just goofing around with friends and doing a shits and giggles type band while Life Long Tragedy was writing songs for the LP. But I would be lying if I said it wasn't a bit discouraging as we have been pushing on with LLT for a couple of years with little to no recognition anywhere outside of Northern California. It's a reflection of today's hardcore scene I guess, where hype outweighs heart to some degree and a few kids can spend 5 minutes writing a bullshit demo and become "the next big thing". Being in Duckhunt made me appreciate being in Life Long Tragedy so much more, because I know any success that we had as a band was because we fucking earned it through hard work and dedication rather than some hype demo that kids shit their pants about on the Bridge 9 messageboard. I don't regret being in Duckhunt. We all had a good time. We just didn't really know what we were getting ourselves into. I just hope kids realize that Duckhunt was nothing more than a joke band and a few laughs. Everyone in Duckhunt is involved in real bands with real significance to us.

What is up next for LLT and how can kids get a hold of your new record and in touch with you?
Scott: We plan on touring our asses off come summer. I'll finally be out of high school so we can focus more on doing this band somewhat full time for awhile. Until then we'll be playing locally and taking a few weekend trips to various places on the west coast. You can purchase "Destined for Anything" through Revhq.com as well as various online distros. Get in touch by going to Lifelongtragedy.org
RJ: Adding to what Scott said, I'd really like to go to Europe by this time next year. We're also going to start writing songs for our next record. I'm really excited about some of the ideas we have.

In your eyes, what is the greatest feeling in the world?
Scott: Haha, we actually had this discussion in the van a few weeks ago. I believe the list was something like: cumming, eating awesome food, sleeping in, playing a good show, showering. Those are some good ones.

I think "Destined For Anything" is a very simple, but special outlook/ideal. It's probably the most positive thing that could be said about life, and its ups and downs. I definitely think it suits LLT as a group because I've always known you to be individuals who have always tried their best, fought hard for their place, and done everything to realize their dreams and give hope to the ones they love. I feel that it's the perfect moniker for your music, while is full of passion, power and the promise of better days. I hope you dudes know that, because I'm far from the only person who feels that way. Was that your goal for this band?
Scott: It absolutely has evolved into that. The concept of "Destined for Anything" is very simple but very powerful. The idea that one is in control of their own destiny, their own struggle, and their own life is something that I personally had to acknowledge. I know it has helped me through rough times and I hope that somehow it can maybe help others that are feeling lost and unsure of themselves. Personal struggle often produces the most profound ways of fighting through the problems that life can throw at you. You really can make or break your life. You really are destined for anything. Thanks so much for the interview, Kirby. And thank you to everyone that took the time to read this.

An Interview With
Karl Sanders



Karl Sanders of Nile is one of the most prolific and important individuals in the death metal scene. Each release has helped to redefine the entire genre and set the bar for lesser bar bands to try and follow their trailblazing path. Not satisfied with the confines of death metal, Sanders recently branched off with his brilliant new solo effort, "Saurian Meditation" which embraces Near East instrumentation, soaring vocals and grandiose style. While in the studio recording for the upcoming fourth Nile full length, Sanders offered up quite a bit of his time to answer my barrage of questions. Intelligent, thoughtful and very funny, this was by far one of the most enjoyable and engaging interviews I've ever done. Ladies and Gentleman, Mr. Karl Sanders...

What made you want to do a solo record?
Well, there was some music that I had playing for quite a few years in my spare time. It was relaxing, quiet kind of music. When there was some leeway in between Nile, I decided that if I was ever going to put this material to record, now was the time. It's a nice break from death metal. I mean especially when I'm on tour. I love death metal; don't get me wrong. Yet, it's good to step back, and then jump in with both feet.

How did you hook up with Mike (Breazeale, vocals), and what brought Pete (Hammoura, drums, and former Nile skinsman) back into the fold for this project?
I've known Mike for several years, since the early 80's. We needed a singer who could do some clean stuff, as well as some weird stuff and Mike was just the perfect choice. He's done some work with Nile before; he was just the right guy. The thing with Pete…he and I have been friends for some twenty odd years. Even though Pete really doesn't want to do death metal anymore, this project was right up his alley. It was good to work with him again.

One of the most eye-catching elements is the artwork. Who is Orion Landau and where I can find more of his work?
He's actually one of the house guys at Relapse, so it was a pretty natural hook up. It was pretty much a no brainer.

As an individual who used to really be into herpetology, I've always appreciated your use of reptiles as symbols and characters in your lyrics, especially on tracks from your solo effort like "Luring The Doom Serpent" and "Dreaming Through The Eyes Of Serpents." I love the way you describe the reptilian gaze in the liner notes. Were you thinking about those stares when you recording the piece?
Yeah, I really tried to focus on that. Their stares are so cold and bottomless, and if you look deep enough, long enough, you being to lose yourself, and awareness of your surroundings. It was a weird feeling, and I tapped into when I recorded the track.

"Of The Sleep Of Ishtar" is my favorite track on "Saurian Mediations." Were you glad to finally get the sound you wanted for it after 13 years? That's got to be pretty damn liberating.
(laughs) It was completely liberating. It was like some sort of chain that I've been dragging around for years was finally cut loose. I finally got it out, and now I'm free of it. Now I can listen to it, and just enjoy it.

What initially drew you to the study of Egypt, and the surrounding ancient Near/Middle East?
Some of it comes from watching big, epic flicks when I was a kid. I was an impressionable young lad. (laughs) Later on, I spent a lot of time hanging out with Pete Hammoura, whose Lebanese. His family is all from the Old Country. Ever so often, he'd have these big family get togethers, where all the relatives would come over and it would be an explosion of Lebanese culture. Food, drink and song would fill the house. It was quite amazing. It was quite different from the normal "Coca-Cola culture" we grow up with here in America.

Which dynasty do you find the most fascinating overall?
I like the pre-Dynastic periods actually. There's less stuff there, so it's often more artistic and interesting. It's great stuff when you are writing death metal, especially since not every text or piece of mythology is suitable as subject matter for death metal. To find the ones that are going to work, it takes some time. If Wallace Budge interprets it one way, and Zahi Hawass looks at another way, I'm going to pick Budge for death metal, because his shit was a hundred years ago and he had all these crazy preconceptions about how the Egyptian thing was. It's just more artistic license for me.

Back in the day, there were a lot of rumors about Carcass being medical students/professors, depending on who was telling the story. That legend reached damn near monolithic proportions at the time because Carcass had such an excellent grasp on medical terminology and procedure. That seems to be the case with you and

Egyptology. I always hear tales of how you are a leading professor of Egyptology at some prestigious university...
(laughs) Yeah, I've heard that too. It's funny though because many students in universities, even professors, have written to me. I'm not an expert; Egyptology is just a hobby for me. Yet, if I'm going to write a song about it, I'm going to drag out every fucking thing I've got on it. I want to make sure I've got my ducks in a row. (laughs) I actually got asked to speak at the Petre Museum in London! I was like "What the fuck am I going to talk about? I'm not going to presume to talk to a group of experts and aficionados about the subject. I'm just a guy who has Egyptology as a hobby, and a strong work ethic."

(laughs) Dude, I think you could have winged it.
(laughs really hard) You think I should have winged it?

Totally man. I'm sure you would have done a great job, and even if things didn't work out it probably would have a very National Lampoon's/Monty Python spirit about it. It could have been hi-larious.
Well I guess if someone had a video camera and taped it, it really could have been.

It would have been the enhanced CD portion of the new Nile CD.
(laughs)

One thing I think is really underappreciated with both your solo work and Nile is the brilliant and experimental recording techniques you utilize and develop. Every single release has some incredible moments where I'm astounded by the way you went about recording. Is that something you always strive to have with your albums?
I think not only do albums need to be interesting to listen to, but they need to be interesting to make. I've heard records where it sounds like no one was having any fun. They follow the exact standard operating procedure and I think that translates when you listen to the record. We try to have what fun is available to us. Whatever the metal gods have to serendipitously offer, you should take and share with people. It makes for a more interesting record I think.

There is some hilarious background information on the songs from "Saurian," I have to ask about a few:

1. Your Sigma Martin getting "abused by multiple ex-femmes:"
Actually those liner notes got chopped off because of a proofreading error. The rest of the story is that yeah, that guitar has been smashed several times by ex-gf's and wives. I didn't think it was going to make sometimes. Thankfully, I have a great repair guy named Dick Young and he's saved it a bunch of time. It's a great guitar, such warm sound. I can't imagine doing a record without it. I mean, I'm out on tour and the crazy, jealous bitch takes the guitar and smashes it or the time when she threw out of the car. Or the worse one was when my one wife used a "bug repellent fogger" in my music room. She puts one in there, doesn't put any of my guitars or equipment away, and sticks the fucker right in the middle of the room and leaves it there. As soon as I get back, my guitars are covered with a half an inch of bug repellent spray. It cost me hundreds of dollars to get my shit repaired. Damn, crazy women. (laughs)

2. The "seaweed drink."
(laughs) Well it's ok if Mike brings it in, he didn't spill it onto the equipment, it was Bob's friend who did. So we just aren't letting Bob's friend in anymore.

3. Punchy (producer Juan "Punchy" Gonzalez) opening and closing the bathroom door to echo the gong. Is there a picture of this?
(laughs) Man, that was a riot. Punchy is so much fun to work with. Unfortunately, it was just us two in the studio that day, and someone had to push record while the gong was played, so no one was around to take a picture. I got the best story though. We had to leave it off the record explanations, but here it is: We wanted some eerie wind effects to finish off "The Elder God Shrine." Punchy and I went through a bunch of sound effect CD's, but everything we found was too much like the stuff you hear on every other black/death metal CD. So he pulls out this CD of Star Trek sound effects from the original series. He plays this one called "Alien Planet Atmosphere No. 1" and puts in and that's exactly what it sounds like. Just like Captain Kirk beaming down, and looking around, with plants rustling and winds blowing. So unmistakably Star Trek. (laughs) So that's what you hear at the end of "Elder God Shrines."

Oh man. Punchy is god among producers. (laughs)
He really is. I love that guy. (laughs)

Are you going to continue with the lyrical explanations on the next Nile record?
Well I keep telling the record company I don't want to since it's so much fucking work, but they keep getting me to. They say "Karl, the fans love it" and I do think it is great though, since it helps make connections with fans and people on a more human level. That's the way I like to look at it. It's a lot of fucking work, but it's worth it.

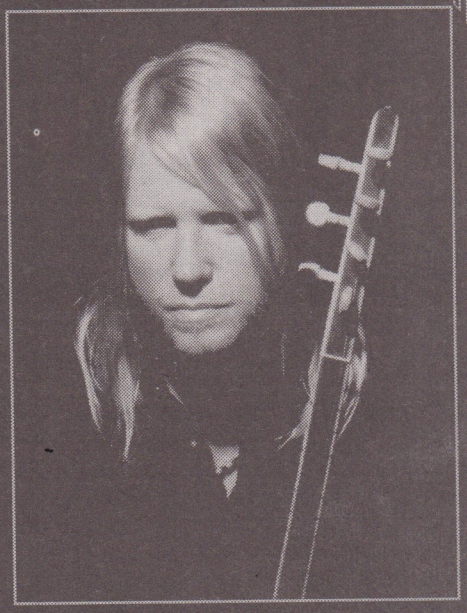
Author H.P. Lovecraft's work seems to play a prominent role in Nile's output. What drew you to his work?
It's just great stuff to sit down and read. Such incredible prose and so colorfully descriptive. I don't think you can get any better than H.P. Lovecraft.

How did the guest spot from David Vincent of Morbid Angel come about?
We just called him up and got him down to the studio. He hung out most of the afternoon and we just had a blast. He thought his part was kind of humorous, so he really threw himself into the role. (chuckles) I think he did a great job. It was so over the top, completely megalomaniacal.

You did a guest spot of your own on Behemoths new record, "Demi-God." With you two being so far apart in actual distance, how did that work out?
Nergal (vocalist/guitarist for Behemoth) sent me some files over the Internet, and showed me where he wanted me to play guitar and I recorded my bits at home, and then sent them back online. It was really easy.

What personal spiritual/philosophical beliefs do you have?
Well, I wasn't around when the universe began, so I'm pretty iffy about saying things began this way or the other. The fact of the matter is that we're here and the knowledge of how we got here got lost somewhere along the way. Maybe it burned with the library at Alexandria… The old histories got lost. So now who knows. Either way, it makes for spectacular artistic license.

When you do artwork for albums, do you prefer to use classical pieces of Egyptian art (like the Palate of Narmer featured on the actual CD of "In Their Darkened Shrines" or modern interpretations (like the collage of "Catacombs of Nephren-Ka"? Both?
You know I don't have any hard set rules on it. I love



the classic stuff, but the modern stuff is great too. I love Orion's contributions to the new record. He takes classic images and reinterprets them using technology.

When did you first pick up the Baglama Saz? What other instruments do you play?
Well my French wife picked the Saz up for me. I'd see one at a music store in Seattle called "Lark In The Morning." I'd been wanting to pick up a sitar, but the saz was more affordable. (laughs) In the end, it had more of the sound I was looking for, very Middle Eastern, which makes sense since it's a Turkish instrument. Started playing it around the house and just knew it would perfect for Nile. Eventually, I played it so much, a lot of the stuff from the solo record grew out of that.

Your guitar teacher, Shawn Allen, guests on "Whence No Traveler Returns." I think that's really cool. You don't see a whole lot of guitar virtuosos bring in their teachers on a record. Definitely a huge gesture of respect.
That's the way I think too. It's very important to show respect to your elders. They teach us a lot. There are so many things that we've learned from the people who came before us, that not to acknowledge is a tragic mistake, a complete disservice to ourselves.

Well now that we've established that you're not a professor of Egyptology at Harvard University, I am curious as to what you do for work or is Nile full time now?
(laughs really hard) Yeah. Nile is pretty full time now.

What can people expect from the new Nile album and how is the recording going?
I think this album is going really, really well. Everything is sounding fucking great. Bob Moore and Neil Kearnon are doing a great job on the production end of things.

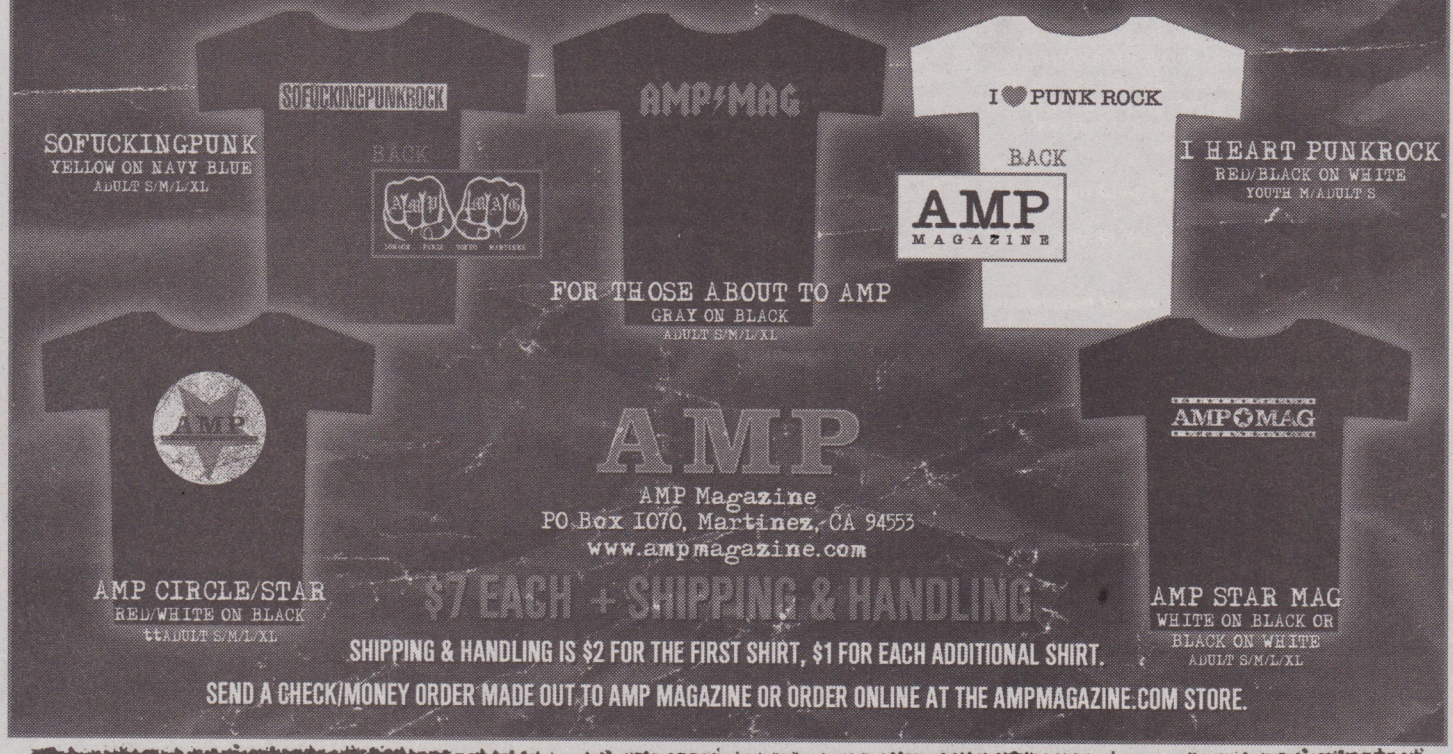
Please tell me there is a Nile DVD coming out...
(laughs) Well, I can tell you that if that's what you want to hear.

Sure thing dude. (laughs)
There is a Nile DVD coming out soon. Whether or not it has any basis in factual reality is another matter…

Damnit.
(we both laugh)

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NOVEMBERS DOOM

By Kirby Unrest

First off, how goes the bass player search?

The response has been great. I never expected to hear from so many people from all over the country wanting a shot at it. We're looking and some people now, and are currently working with an old bass player, Brian Whited to see how things go. We're taking it slowly, to make sure we don't pass up a great opportunity. We need to find the perfect person for the band.

You've had quite a few different labels over the years. What drew you to The End?

We have always been big fans of The End Records. Any magazine you pick up, any metal website you go to, you see ads for The End. And look at their band roster, it's great. They only sign bands they feel would fit into the mix. They have to generally like your music… It's not just about making the most money, they are about believing in the bands artistic view. We also had a chance to work with Andreas on the tour we did in February of 2004. Andreas came on the tour with his bands, The Gathering and Agalloch, and we saw how hard he worked for them. To see a label owner go out on the road, to work for his bands was a great site, and we knew then we wanted to be a part of such a great label.

Why did you re-release "To Welcome The Fade" and include "For Every Leaf That Falls?"

To Welcome The Fade originally came out on Dark Symphonies, and we had some differences of opinion on how the CD was being advertised, and our future goals no longer matched the goals of the labels. We had an opportunity to take this CD, and release it again, and so to give it a chance, to sell as many copies as it could, we re-released it on The End Records, and included a bonus CD with live tracks, and the most obvious was the self released EP. That is still one of most requested CD to buy from us, and we've long been out. I found a box of 10 discs, and they sold in a few days, so we decided to put it on the bonus CD. It's just something extra for the fans. If you already own both the original pressing of Fade, and the original For Every Leaf That Falls, then you might want this for the 2 live tracks and the video.

How did you hook up with Subterranean Masquerade and what is the status of that project presently?

Tomer Pink contacted me awhile back, telling me about the project, and asking me if I would be involved in it. I listened to the two songs he had demoed for the EP, and agreed to do it. Shortly after, he wrote the full length, and I went to Salt Lake City and recorded the vocals for the full length. Other then this, I have no involvement in it. This is Tomer's baby, and he's got a real vision on what he wants it to sound like. I think he's writing the second full length now, which is part of a trilogy, and we've not determined if I will be a part of it or not. Right now, the full length should be seeing the light of day in April 2005 sometime.

What are your thoughts on Doom Metal today?

This is an interesting question for me… I have not felt like Novembers Doom is a "doom" band for several CD's now. It's very hard to pigeon hole us into one style of music. We're not "Doom" enough for the true doom metal fans, and we're not fast enough for the death metal fans. We fall somewhere in the middle of it all. We started to classify what we do as dark metal. That's all it is… Mid paced metal, with death, and doom, and very dark elements. We don't want to be lumped into





any one style, as we have so many influences, that do not draw from even other metal bands! People are quick to judge us, and call us "clones" or that we rip off other bands in the genre. Truth is, we've been around, doing what we do for much longer then many of these bands, and we have progressed every CD, with deep roots in our roots. So, to answer your question, I really have no thoughts on it, as I'm not really into it as I once was.

How is the Chicago scene right now?
We've got some amazing bands here right now, like 12th Gate, Enforsaken, Ion Vein, Usurper… The problem is we're running out of good places to play. When ever a club comes along and plays metal, they end up closing down not long after. The scene here is tough. Great bands, but the fan support needs to be a bit stronger as well. Get off your dead asses and get out to support your local bands!

I love the artwork courtesy of Travis Smith. I know you've had previous projects executed with him before. When it came to designing "To Welcome The Fade," was he your primary choice?
Yes it was. I gave him the general concept, and he passed my expectations. I think the cover fits the mood, and the lyrics to this CD perfectly. It's one of my favorite pieces I've seen Travis do, and I'm happy it was for us! He's an amazing talent!

How is Cathy Jo Henna doing? Is Nora O'Connor a permanent member of Novembers Doom, at least in the studio?
Cathy is doing OK. I talk to her as often as time allows these days, and she's doing OK. She has a lot of personal issues she needs to attend to, and personal health is the most important thing in life. She's strong, and with the help from family and friends, she'll do fine. I wouldn't be surprised if you hear her voice again in the future! Her talent is too great to keep it hidden from the rest of us. That would just be too much of a shame. Nora O'Connor was hired on as a session musician, and never a part of the band. Eric set this up at the time, loving her voice. I think she worked out well for what we needed at the time.

Neil Kernon, who has worked with many notable artists such as Judas Priest, Queensryche and Nevermore, produced "To Welcome The Fade." I think it's your best record all around to date. Do you think having Neil aboard was a big part of that?
Well, he was certainly part of that! We worked hard at writing To Welcome the Fade, and while writing it, we knew we wanted a much cleaner and stronger production then The Knowing had, so we talked with Neil and decided to work with him. He really taught us a lot about what to do, and what not to do while recording, and in the end, he gave us an amazing sounding CD. It was a fantastic experience, and I would love to work with Neil again in the future.

Any plans for touring?
We are looking to tour quite a bit in 2005 to support the new CD, The Pale Haunt Departure, which will be released on March 8th. Hopefully a couple North American tours, then we'll get our asses to Europe. That's the plan anyway!

What are your thoughts on the growing amount of female vocalists (traditional, operatic styled vocalists I mean) in metal? Do you think it's just a bid for more mainstream listeners?
I think it's so overdone, and now so cliché to use them, we opted for the first release of the bands career, to not use female vocals on the newest CD. At the time we id it, back in 1990, people had not heard this much before, other then a band like Celtic Frost, who had used them on a some material. This was part of the atmosphere we tried to create, and today, it's jammed down peoples throat with every band in the style. I'm not saying we invented it or anything silly like that, I'm just saying we felt like if we added them to the new CD, it would be just to have them on the CD, instead of be an important element. When we chose to use Nora O'Connor on To Welcome the Fade, we wanted something different sounding, and not the typical operatic style vocals, and went with a more "poppy" sounding voice. Very different for us, and different for the genre. For The Pale Haunt Departure, it just wasn't needed.

I read an interview a while back in which you said one of your hopes for the legacy of Novembers Doom was to be remembered and respected as a leader in the genre. I feel you definitely have reached that goal (in terms of American doom). What are your thoughts?
You're only as good as your last release. We continue to explore our music, and try new things all the time, so hopefully we can stay respected when people who expect us to fall into a genre of music, and we no longer do. It's hard, because you want to grow as musicians, and we don't want to keeping being a farm for the same songs over and over. Some people love this, and it pisses of others. You can't please everybody, all the time, so we just keep doing what we do to please ourselves, and not worry too much about reviewers and such. If people still want to consider us a leader in the American Doom genre, I'm proud to be looked at that way. At the same time, I'd love to be given a fair listen from people who aren't into the "doom" scene, because I think we can reach a much wider scope of audience. I guess total world domination would make me happy. Hahaha!

Along the same lines, I've always been kind of bummed that American doom, like American black metal, seems to be brushed off by many in the world community of metal because of its country of origin. I don't really understand that. Anything you'd like to say about that way of thinking?
We've been in a trap since the day we started in this. Being from America, people assume you ripped off the European bands. I say, get your head out of your ass and do your research. Some these worshipped bands of today, that we supposedly "ripped off" came after we did, and some were fans of ours first. It's not a competition by any means, but lazy reviewers piss me off. Anyone that can listen to our music these days, and honestly compare us to other bands in the style, and say we rip them off, need to clean the shit out of their ears, and get off their high horse, because we're nothing like some of these bands we're compared to. Not writing style, not sound, not lyrically. Some people are just lazy, and take the easy way out, and do a quick review just to keep getting their free CD's from the labels.

How has fatherhood changed your life?
It's the single most rewarding and amazing experience of my life. I would not change anything about it. I have such an amazing bond with my daughter, and we share a lot together. Just the ability to watch her as she grows into a little person, with her own personality has been the greatest gift I could have ever been given. She is easily the best thing in my life, and I have my wife to thank for that. I'm certainly stronger, mentally now, and have so much to look forward to because of her. I never thought I could love this much.

What's up next for November's Doom?
The new CD, The Pale Haunt Departure, comes out on March 8th, 2005. We should be hitting the road with our first tour to support the new CD around that time. We're shooting a video for the title track in January 2005, and this should be available for viewing in February. We want to play on European soil in 2005, as well as record and release a live DVD. Writing will start for new material in there somewhere as well. Other then this, we're pretty much wide open. Hahaha! World domination, baby!

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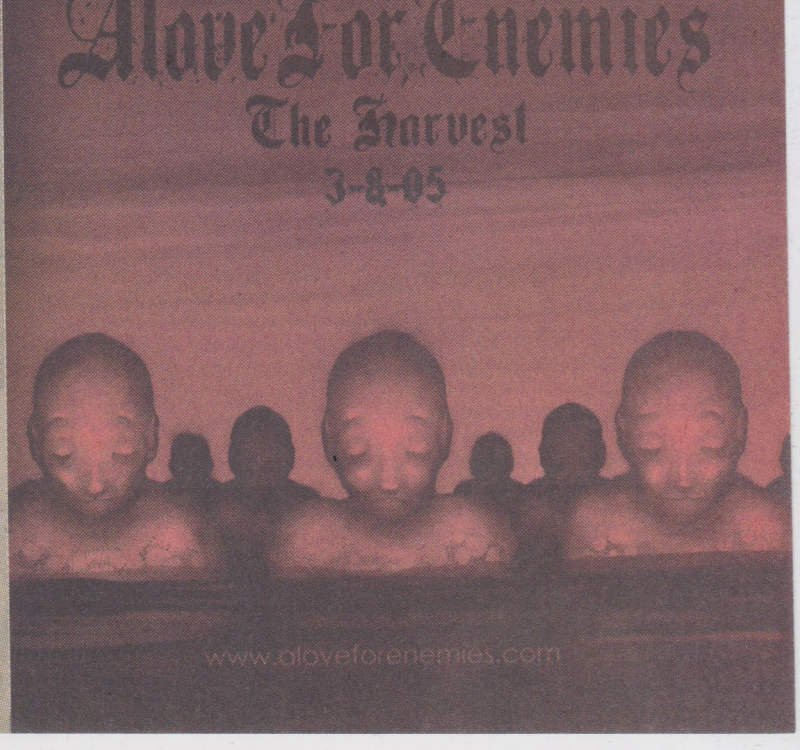
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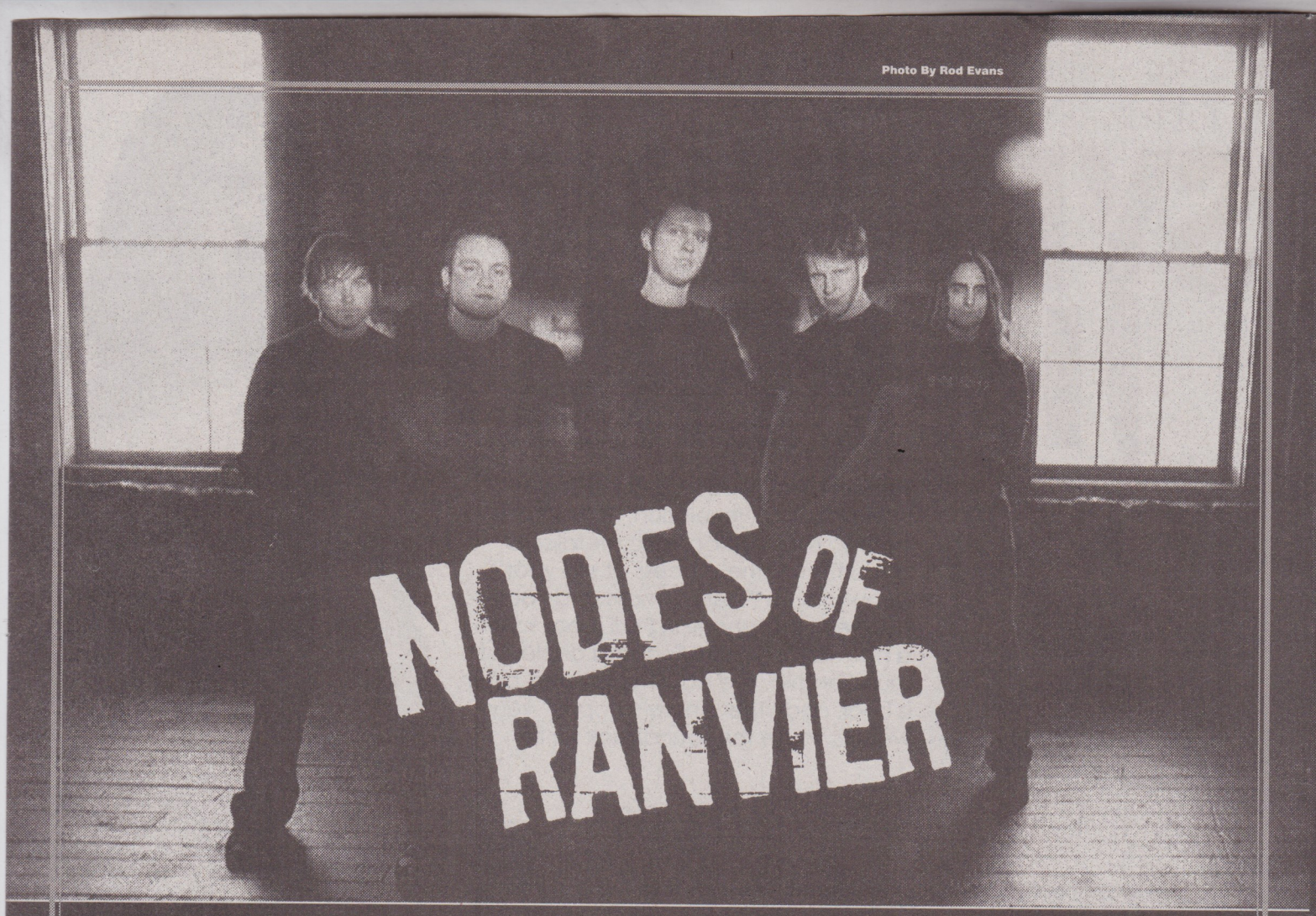


Photo By Rod Evans

By Jonathan Carter

When Nodes was first in need of a vocalist and Kyle stepped up, it was only a few months before you took on that role yourself, what was it that motivated that decision? We had met Kyle just briefly prior to actually having him do the gig. We were talking about just having it be a temporary thing to begin with. We just thought that having someone closer, someone from our family would probably be better to do the job.

Was singing something that you've wanted to do or did you just kind of fall into that spot?
Before I joined Nodes as a bass player I was in a band called Drown Your Sorrows and I did vocals for that band. I enjoy singing just as much as I enjoy playing bass.

Awesome, I'm really excited to hear how your vocals sound on upcoming material. Since you were already a member of the band was it pretty easy to take on the role of vocalist?
It was a very easy step actually. I pretty much knew all the lyrics already because before I was actually in Nodes I was a fan and I had followed the band and was good friends with these guys. My old band Drown Your Sorrows actually did a tour with them a few years ago so I really knew the songs.

So as a fan you can now get up on stage and perform the songs that you used to love, how cool is that?
Yeah it's great. I couldn't ask for anything more.

Since your position move you guys have done some touring with Glass Casket, Reflux and others, what was it like now being the front man of the band?
At first I was a little weary as far as kids not accepting me in the vocal position. Kids were obviously asking about the old singer but I got nothing but good comments from kids on the road saying that they like the new lineup and like you said they can't wait to hear the new stuff. Everyone has been really accepting, we have great fans.

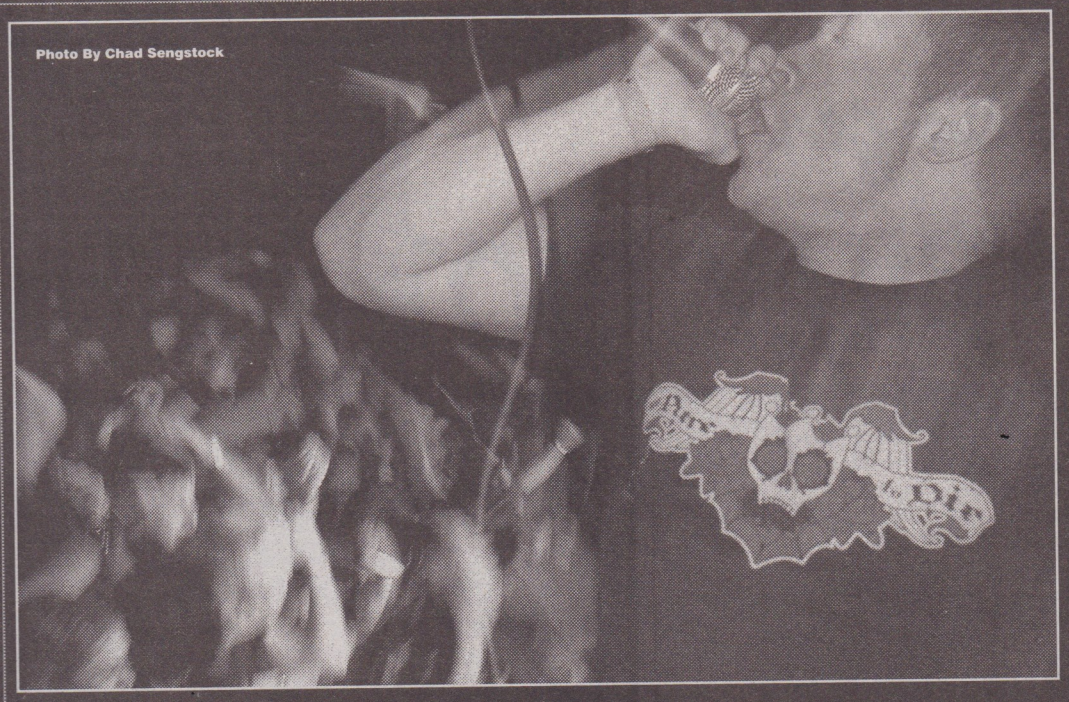
Would you say that you're starting to get pretty comfortable with being the front man?
Yeah definitely. I don't even know how many tours I've been doing it now, but I'm really starting to get the hang of it. I'm kind of loosening up a little bit more and I've been testing my vocal range a little bit more.

How do you think that your vocals compare to vocals on previous records?
Anyone that has seen us might think they're a little bit different, but as far as the style, it's pretty similar. We don't want to steer to far away from what we were before and come out sounding completely different. From the comments I've heard people tend to like it.

Do you ever miss playing the bass or are you getting to like being a singer?
Someday I think I'd like to get back into playing the bass but right now I'm focusing primarily on Nodes. Maybe as a side project one day I'll play again, because I really do enjoy it.

You're pretty much an all around musician then, you've got your love for bass and now for singing and you do both very well.
Thanks a lot.

So your new album is entitled "The Years To Come" and


Photo By Chad Sengstock

that hits stores in April. What is the meaning behind that name, and what are some topics you touch on in the lyrics?
The actual title stems from not knowing what's ahead in the future and the suspense of what's to come. "What the Future Holds" is actually the title of one of the songs on the cd. The album touches on a lot of different subjects such as depression which I personally have gone through. There's a song called "Predisposed" and it goes out to people who struggle with depression and battle with it in their life. There's another song called "Heartbreak Decimal Point" that is about people who put to much faith into the media and just taking everything to heart as far as what they see on TV and all that. There's a lot of different things that get touched on and hopefully a lot of people enjoy it and can relate to it. That's really where I wanted to go with it, keep things really simple and easily digestible so people can pick it up right away. I think in the fast paced world we live in, kids would rather have something they can pick up right away and relate to right away instead of having to dissect complex metaphors. I'm not saying there's not some of that there, but it's very simple, straight to the point and honest.

So you really tried to pour your heart out and be as personal on this album of possible.
It's definitely very personal.

Musically speaking, it was said that the new record is going to be your heaviest album to date, would you agree with that?
I would definitely agree. It's a little more aggressive and I'd even say a little more percussive than the older material. As far as heaviness goes it does not lack in that department.

Did you guys aim to create a heavier sound or did it just kind of flow that way?
We pretty much all got together in the same room and it came out. It's a completely different lineup from the last record. Only two members that were on the self-titled album are still in the band. Obviously different things are going to come out from everyone, but as far as it being very aggressive, it definitely is. The Nodes sound is still there and I think kids are still going to like it.

What are some other changes we can look forward to on the upcoming album that are changes or improvements from the last?
The songs are definitely more structured, more tight, and short. There is a little bit more singing on this record, but it's not forced, I think people are really going to like what they hear. Everyone put their two cents in and we got we got, and I think it's great.

So you'd say it's going to be a really clean and well done album?
We're hoping so. We're going back to the same studio that we recorded the last two records, and they've kind of upped their equipment and the studio. We're going to spend an entire month putting it together, so we're really stoked about that. We'll be able to still work our jobs and record at the same time since it's right here in our hometown.

I know you guys are all busy with your other jobs, but once you release the new album do you have any plans yet for touring in support of it?
Nothing is set in stone yet other than Facedown Fest. Right now we're primarily focusing on the record and getting that done, and maybe some other big things will come about, if not we still love playing our music.

For those of us who haven't had the privilege of seeing Nodes live since the latest lineup change, or possibly even at all, what could you say about your live performances?
If they've seen the band a long time ago, I remember way back when people would say it was a little on the slow side and kind of boring, and I think we have a lot more energy now. The new stuff is more aggressive, and we try to bring a positive vibe to the shows where kids are smiling, bobbing their heads, and if they want to go nuts in the pits, we're all about it.

If you could choose any handful of bands to tour with in the upcoming months, who would be ideal for you and Nodes?
In the past we've played with bands like Bury Your Dead, Integrity, On Broken Wings, and we did some dates with Terror, primarily hardcore bands. We're looking to play with some heavy metal bands. Glass Casket was a lot of fun, and we're hoping to get on some big metal tours and play with some metal bands every night. Playing with hardcore bands it's like we're the oddball every night. We love all of that, and the kids are so supportive, but a metal tour would be cool.

One thing I've taken from Nodes is that you guys are all so down to earth, and after talking with you I can appreciate how true that really is. You don't get that with every band and I think that kids can see that and respect it a lot, and that's why you guys are where you are today.
That is definitely the image that we're trying to project. I always say after the show to come talk to us and meet everybody and make friends, that's what it's all about, getting to connect with people and talk with them about their lives and what not. Hopefully they enjoy the music too.

Perfect dude, you guys seem to have a lot ahead of you. Do you have anything else you'd like to add?
To all of our fans and friends out on the road, we miss you all very much and god bless. We hope to see you soon. The new record will be out soon and we'll be hitting the road. We can't wait to play for everybody cause our jobs are wearing on us. [Laughs] We miss playing music.

Thanks a lot for your time Nick, we look forward to hearing more from you guys very soon.

Dulcie Younger's ROCKABILLY RIOT



Peggy Lee, the Golden Girl of American jazz, may be a name too quickly forgotten or dismissed by young audiences. From working girl to pop sensation, Peggy Lee, lived the American dream and left a legacy of many of the best arrangements and songs in the history of music.

Lee was a spirited fireball, and her rich catalogue of songs reflected her goofy yet deliberate approach to life and music. At one of her last performances befor e her death in 2002, Peggy Lee rolled out on stage in her wheelchair and broke into a tongue-in-cheek rendition of "I Won't Dance". Songs like "Manana" ("Tomorrow is good enough for me...") showcased her silly side (and also topped the charts for nine weeks, making it Capitol Records' biggest hit from a singer/songwriter until The Beatles). She also recorded nonsense songs full of gibberish phrases that she penned, such as "Blum, Blum (I Wonder Who I Am)".



Before her rise to fame, Lee worked slicing bread in a bakery to supplement the small income she derived from singing on the radio in Fargo, North Dakota. Band leader Benny Goodman discovered her one night at Chicago's Ambassador West Hotel, where she was working on a singing engagement. She eventually left Goodman's band and started her solo career at Capitol Records.



Best known for her version of "Fever", Peggy Lee starred opposite Al Jolson in the movie "The Jazz Singer" and was nominated by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for her role as a despondent and alcoholic blues singer in "Pete Kelly's Blues" . She also supplied lyrics and voices for Disney's "Lady and The Tramp". Lee was nominated for twelve Grammy awards and received the Lifetime Achievement Award in 1995.



Rendezvous with PEGGY LEE

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I've never been a huge Jerry Lee Lewis fan (I know, I just got blacklisted and "ex"ed from the cool crowd. Oh well.) Having said that, I think piano player Aaron Deily from Rumble King could pretty much kick Jerry Lee's tushy. I mean, in a knockdown drag-out fight, I'd have to crown Rumble King.

Why do I say that? (No, I'm not trying to sleep with the band, although if I was, that would be a darned good reason). I say that because I'm hooked on this Rumble King CD "Rockin' Kind", and I'm very impressed that Aaron lugs around an upright piano with him to shows. It's one thing to take piano lessons in the fourth grade (yes, that would be me). It's another thing entirely to bang away on the darned thing like your life depends on it and holler some impressive bluesy vocals into a microphone while your doing it (yes, that would be Aaron). Not to mention, the rich back-up doowop vocals and the colorful saxophone stylings.

The Rumble King website refers to the band as "swing". I think that's selling these boys short. They are also Rhythm-and-Blues, blues, doowop, and rockabilly. The lyrics are happening, the song structure is tight, and the album artwork is hep. What more do you need?

Want to send me hate mail? Junk mail? Blackmail? Any kind of mail...send it to dulcieyounger@yahoo.com. Bands, labels, and promoters, please feel free to contact me but please note that I generally do not review bands that do not have an album out. Why? Because I hate you. Just kidding. It's out of fairness to my readers...if I go on and on and on and on about bands that they have no way of hearing, well, you know, they might turn the page. Hey, where are you going?

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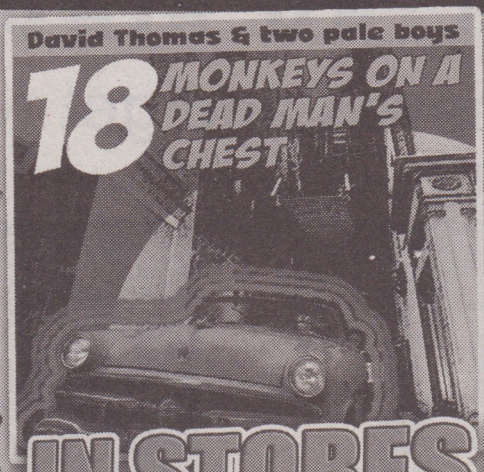
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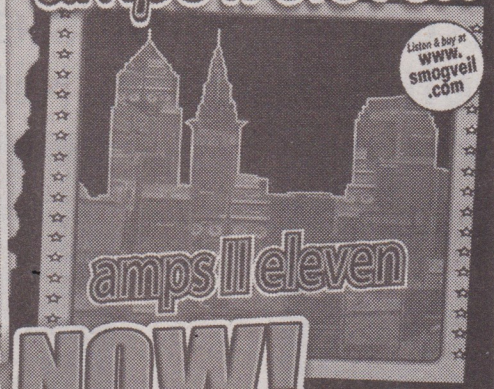


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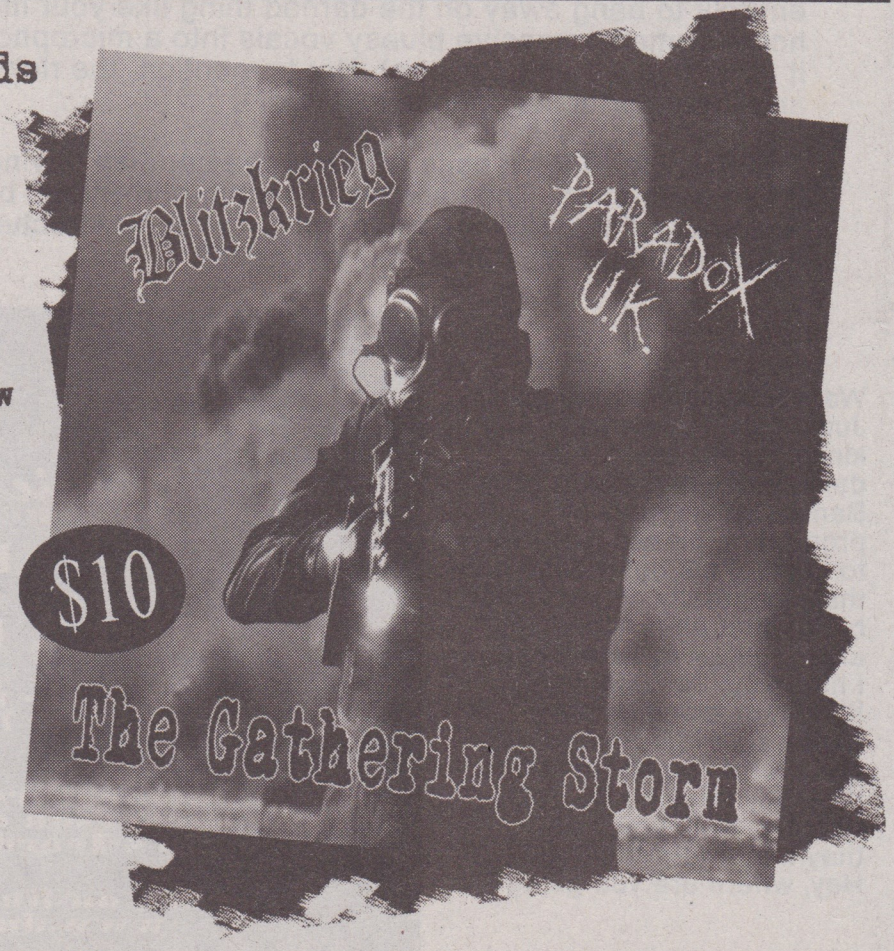
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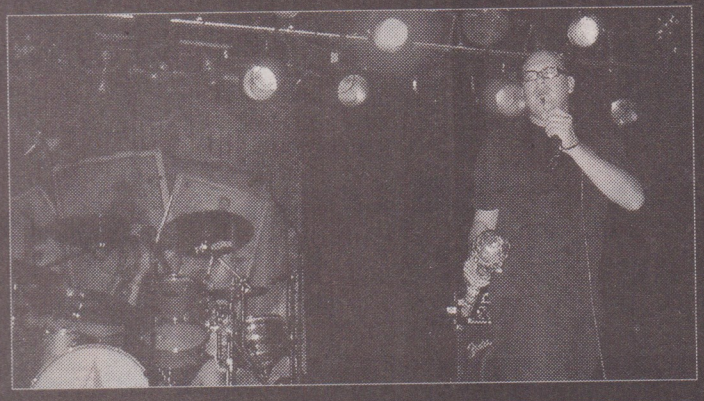
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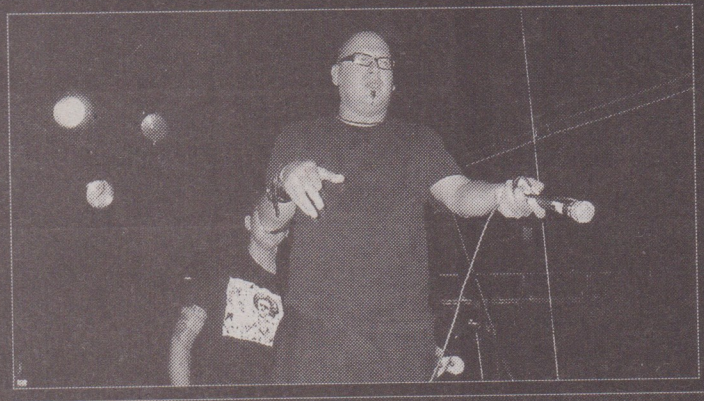


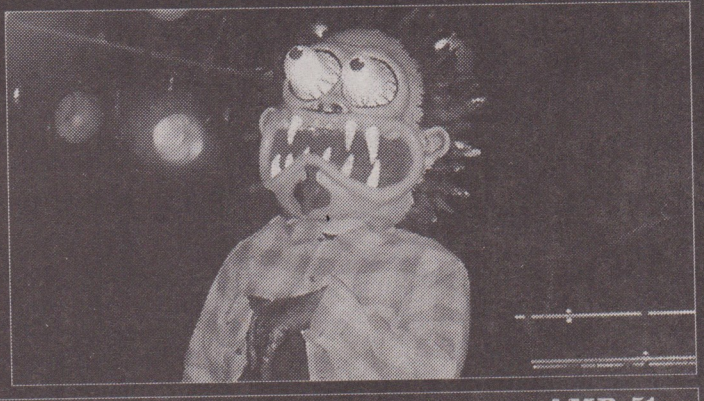












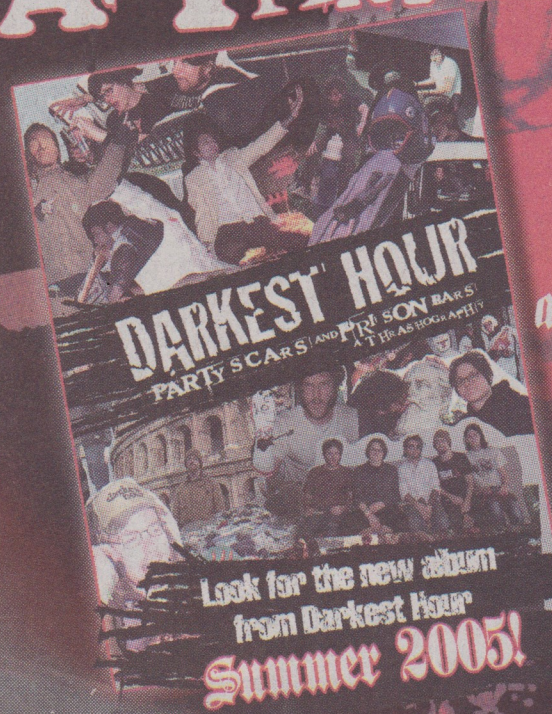
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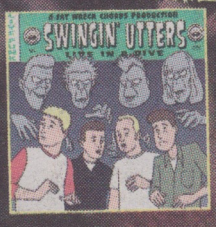
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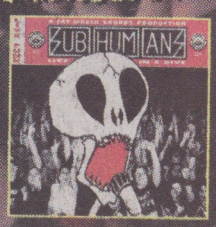
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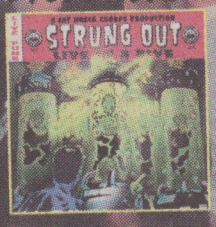
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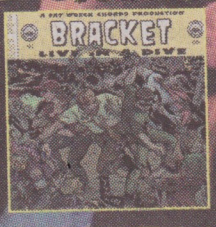
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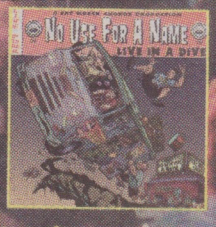








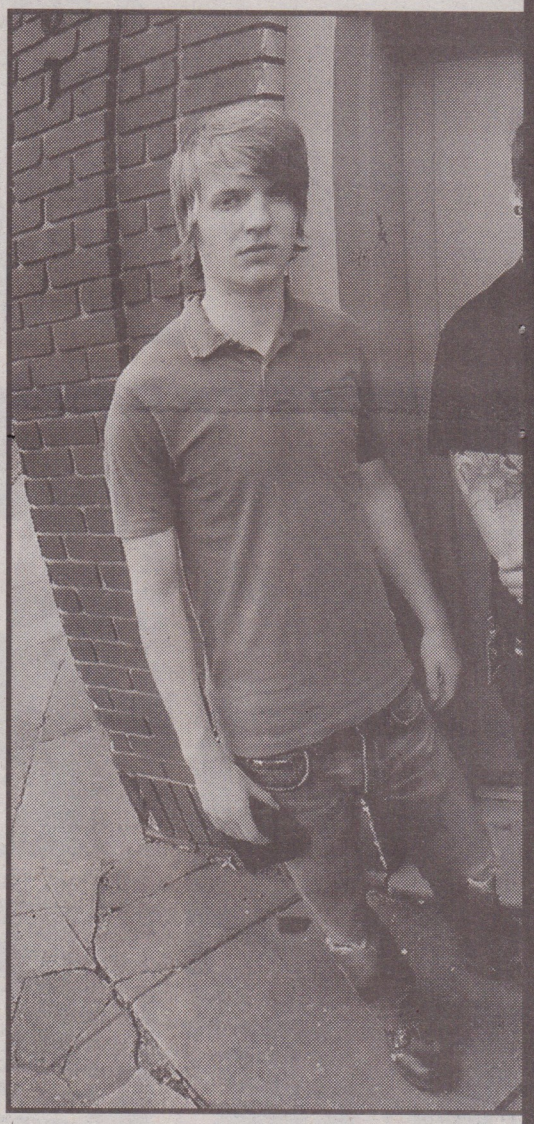




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MISERY SIGNALS



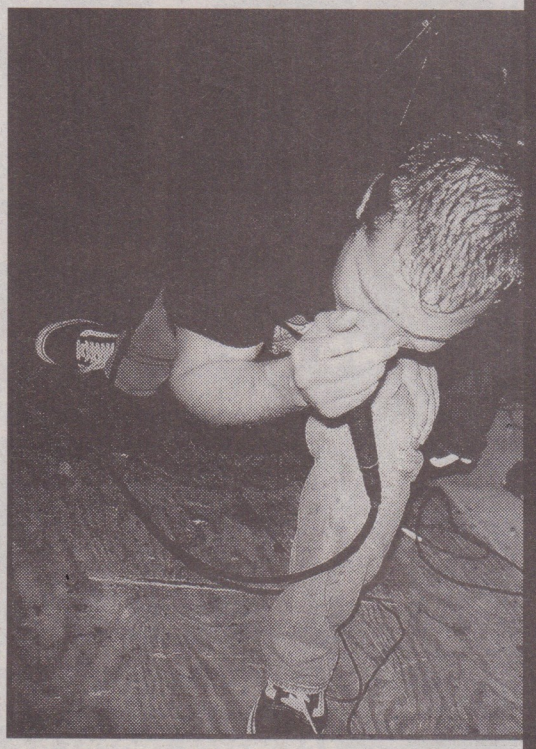
By Samantha Everts / Photography By Ryan Russel

From the ashes of a tragedy most bands would never be able to recover from, Misery Signals has risen to further blur the lines between hardcore and metal on their new album *Of Malice and the Magnum Heart*, released on Ferret Records. While gaining momentum on tour as Compromise and 7 Angels 7 Plagues in the summer of 2002, a drunk driver struck Compromise's van killing guitarists Jordan Wodehouse and Daniel Langlois, for whom the album is dedicated. Shortly after, 7 Angels 7 Plagues broke up inspiring the remaining members to form Misery Signals. Since then, they have become a touring machine, traveling across North America to play their fast and heavy hardcore mixed with brilliant instrumental interludes. Exhausted after a nine-week spot on the Dillinger/Zao tour, vocalist Jesse Zaraska and bassist Kyle Johnson agreed to speak with me.

The album accordingly deals with feelings of remorse and loss "I always write about my life, the things that happen in it, so it was just a natural progression for us to write a record based on the [devastating] things that have happened to us," says Zaraska. After the accident, deciding whether or not to continue to play in a band for Zaraska was "the only way to feel better." Expressing the anger, grief, and regret that came with his friends' deaths in lyrics became a therapeutic experience, which he hopes others can relate to. Nowhere is this more evident than in "The Year The Summer Ended in June," a track that is both musically and lyrically stunning. One can only hope that the video that they have just filmed in New York City, consisting of mainly live footage, will reflect the song's message; "It should be on Much Music and MTV once it's done," says Zaraska.

Ferret Records, familiar with the members former bands, upon hearing their blistering EP signed them and by March 2004 Misery Signals had recorded their first full length in Vancouver, B. C., which has been very well received by both metal and hardcore fans. Although Johnson claims that it was a "short month" they are thrilled with how the record turned out. "What these guys did in the instrumental "World of Dreams" sets them apart from other bands," says Zaraska. Johnson adds, "We're lucky to be on such a good label," and hints that there has been some talk about heading over to Europe soon.

One of the reasons why they were invited to join The Dillinger Escape Plan, Zao and Every Time I Die was because of their appeal to both audiences, "We could play metal shows, but we are a hardcore band because of the things we sing about and what we stand for," says Zaraska. Admittedly a little intimidated at first by Dillinger's reputation, Zaraska says that they "were really kind to us off the bat." While bassist, Kyle Johnson, raves that it was the "Fuckin', the best tour we've











"WE COULD PLAY METAL SHOWS, BUT WE ARE A HARDCORE BAND BECAUSE OF THE THINGS WE SING ABOUT AND WHAT WE STAND FOR."

ever done in our lives. They [Dillinger Escape Plan] are the most professional, consistently awesome band. It went over really well and was like the perfect crowd for us."

There has been much talk about the 'metalcore' genre being led into the mainstream by groups like Atreyu, so when asked about how he thought Misery Signals style of melodic hardcore fit in, Zaraska had this to say: I think the difference between metal and hardcore is what you choose to sing about and the things you choose to play in. I think musically, we're basically a metal band, but because of my lyrics [we're not]."

Growing up with classic rock, and later heavier bands like Turmoil, Converge, and Cave-In, the guys admit that they really can't listen to hardcore in the van much, and are just as likely to throw on some David Bowie as the new With Honor CD. Johnson laughs, "The brothers listen to a lot of hip-hop."

Although excited about going home, the guys are anxious to record another album in the near future and leave no hint that they are stopping anytime soon.

www.miserysignals.net

JESSE LUSCIOUS

Rockin' Is Our Business

Down the street some friends are protesting via playing free folk music to a crowd of people waiting in line. Like many AMP readers, I generally choose to protest folk music rather than use folk music to protest, but it's an interesting event tonight. Well-known folk singer Utah Phillips, radical anarcho-leftist, is playing a sold-out $22 show at the Freight and Salvage, a local folk landmark that's independently owned and operated. Led by a former Head Coordinator of 924 Gilman, a few young radicals are playing acoustic tunes and passing out flyers decrying the door charge as the crowd waits to be admitted into the venue. Apparently Utah Phillips has already come out and spoken with them, and seemed to agree with the thrust of their protest: that working class people can't afford to hear Utah Phillips, a master of working class (i.e. folk) music. When I left, Utah had just come outside again and was hanging out watching and softly singing with them. After the dust settled, the protest was more of an event with a point- and Utah may be playing 924 Gilman before too long!

Go! Go! Go!

These kids (er, teens, 20 somethings, 30 somethings) are taking a common flashpoint in the punk scene (high door prices) and applying it to an ideologically related music scene. No doubt the folk scene has its own stable of evergreen controversies (Dylan going electric, anyone?), but it's kinda cool that it's our people who are doing it this time. The more cross-pollination between radicals and malcontents the rosier our future looks. Even if the specific issue of high door prices is dealt with one way or another, there's been that much more communication and dialog between like-minded creative scenes. A little new blood doesn't hurt a scene- no matter what purists say- and Gilman regulars playing free folk music for the Freight and Salvage crowd definitely qualifies!

The more we work with each other and look past the more superficial differences between us, the better. That's why I'm stoked about tonight's protest, and why I'm stoked that long-time anarcho-book publisher AK Press has been releasing folk cds. Without specifically pushing their product- after all, I wouldn't know a great folk record if it came up and strummed its acoustic guitar at me- I definitely support it.

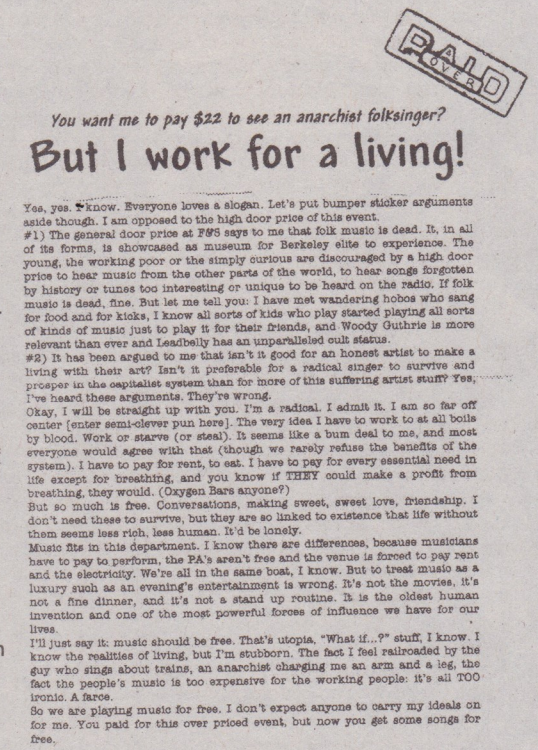
Everything's Wild in Wildwood

Here's an example a lot closer to home for most AMP readers. When The Gr'ups were on tour with Citizen Fish in 1993, Dick Lucas, singer for both Citizen Fish and the Subhumans (U.K.), and I were chatting one night in Norway. I was shocked when he mentioned that he had finally met the singer for Conflict, one of the other great British anarcho-punk bands of the 1980s, just the year before. I always assumed that the smaller British scene meant that prominent personalities met sooner than in the US. No doubt there's dozens of similar stories everywhere- but this one underlined for me the often unintentional balkanization of like-minded people.

I Said No

While I think $22 is a bit much for a music show featuring one person and his guitar at a small venue, I'm ambivalent about the meaning and intent behind tonight's protest. Also, I don't know enough details about the show- is it a benefit? Is Utah raising funds for a life-saving operation? (okay, this second scenario seem odd since an operation like that would probably top $100,000- way more than the proceeds from a Freight show) Utah seems to perform at every protest in the Bay Area so he's not difficult to see for free. More importantly, the mindset that says that artists shouldn't make money off of his/her art is dangerously flawed. For years I've been in the camp that says that- in our current capitalist society- it's better for artists to survive off of their creative output in an ethical manner than for them to slave away for The Man and have to cram their creative efforts into their spare time like some hobby. I don't think it's preferable that Artist X work 40 hours a week for McDonalds or H&R Block. It's much better for Artist X to survive without enriching the corporate bottom line with their time or their expertise.

But what about the commodification of art? Ignoring the fact that any production of art meets the definition of commodification, it's clearly a matter of degree. Until the fabled revolution comes, we're stuck with this capitalist society and it's a question of how much commodification of art we can take. If money and/or barter is collected and spent as ethically as possible, then I'm all for it. When artists start charging $75 for an arena seat because another 5% will be added to the net profit and will enable them to purchase some more Mercedes Benz stretch limos, that's clearly beyond the pale. Like most of the hot button MRR letters section issues, it's not black and white. Also like most of the hot button MRR letters section issues, it's been talked to death by many people, including myself, so I'll stop here.



This Is It

Here's a repeat paragraph about national politics from last issue. No doubt I'll include it in next month's column too: Now's the time to stay strong and keep fighting the bastards. To stop is to do what they want. Fuck that and fuck them.

Bald Head

I strongly recommend anyone interested in running a serious local campaign to start thinking about the basics in mid-2005 for a 2006 run. You don't have to actually start working on it for another year or so, but make sure your life is ready for the time commitment a local campaign can demand. In the meantime, get more involved with your local government- are there commissions you can take part in? Is there a Councilmember or Supervisor who is pushing an initiative you support? Have you worked with your local government on a skate park, a venue, police issues, anything? If not, go for it. If so, expand your activities and meet more people who are movers and shakers in your neighborhood and in your town.

Ride Man, Ride

Returning to folk music, I've been able to, via a circuitous route, come to appreciate some of it. My parents, being liberal northeasterners in the 1960s, took me to Pete Seeger concerts and played Arlo Guthrie records throughout my childhood. After getting into the hard rock (and later the punk), I started to appreciate- through early rocknroll like Chuck Berry- rockabilly. From rockabilly it was a short jump to country swing (via the Treniers and the Brian Setzer Orchestra [it WAS the early 1990s!]), and then through X and my Gr'ups band mates to Johnny Cash and The Knitters, and then to country. From there, a decade later, it was a full circle back to Woody Guthrie and the Kingston Trio. While "Alice's Restaurant" is the only Arlo I've enjoyed in the

JESSE LUSCIOUS

past 10 years, Woody's got some great, cutting tunes that would make most punks proud. "Lindbergh," about famed aviator and Nazi sympathizer Charles Lindbergh, comes to mind. Luckily, I've volunteered at KALX, UC Berkeley's free-form college radio station since 1991 so I've been able to explore new music pretty much at will. Tune in at http://kalx.berkeley.edu or tune in at 90.7 FM if you're in the San Francisco Bay Area, to hear us dig deep into our 40 year-old library. We have 40,000 vinyl lps and 10"s, 3,000 7"s, and 25,000+ cds. It's such a great place to learn about new and old music, and most djs take requests, 24-7!

It Rocks! It Rolls! It Swings!

One last note about non-new music: I mentioned The Treniers above. They're a- possibly the- missing link between country swing, early R&B, and the impending rock and roll of Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Chuck Berry. They were a black brother act from the US who mesmerized an unrecorded Elvis Presley while performing with Dean Martin on Martin and Lewis's "Colgate Comedy Hour" in 1954. They did novelty songs with Willie Mays ("Hey Willie"), songs about drugs ("Hadacol [That's All]"), date rape ("[Uh Oh] Get Out of the Car"), and a curiously innocent tune called "Poontang." This latter tune is one of my favorites, and appeared on one of Deke Dickerson's recent rockabilly cds on Hightone Records with one of the surviving Treniers introducing the song! Definitely a forgotten bridge between various musics, there's a cd compilation of their songs on a major label that came out in the mid-1990s which is probably the cheapest way to hear their music. There's a website put together by one of the Treniers' nephews at thetreniers.com but it hasn't been updated in a couple of years.

Sugar-Doo

Alright, here's a short list of new records which flipped my lid this past year. To the people who always say that there wasn't much good music as a preface to their year end lists, I say stuff it. There's just as much great stuff this year as last year. These aren't in any order. Lars Fredricksen and the Bastards "Viking", Soviettes "II", Dwarves "Must Die", Slapshot "Digital Hardcore", V/A "War If It Feels Good, Do It" (HipHopSlam), William Shatner "Has Been", Alkaline Trio/One Man Army BYO split, Beastie Boys "To The Five Boroughs", Evaporators "Ripple Rock", V/A "Old Skars and Upstarts 2004" (Disaster), Slim Cessna's Auto Club "The Bloudy Tenent Truth Peace", Die Hunns "Long Legs", DOA "Live Free or Die", Smugglers "Mutiny In Stereo", Jello Biafra and the Melvins "Never Breathe What You Can't See", Post-Haste (Ionik), Green Day "American Idiot", and eX-Girl "Endangered Species".

Reissues that came out in 2004 include The Clash "London Calling", all of the Paris releases, Spits "19 Million AC", and Zolar X "Timeless".

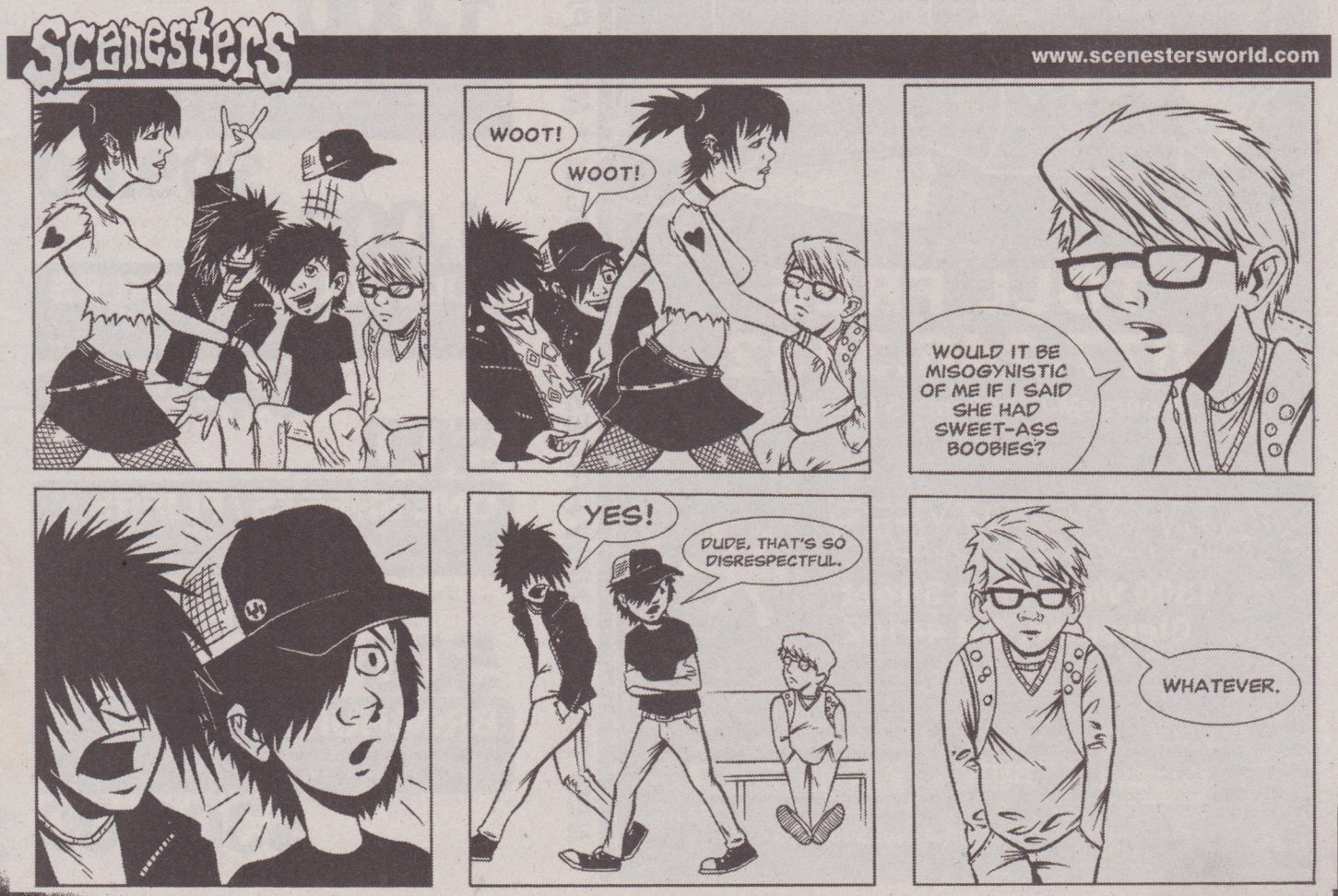
Disappointment of the year: Descendents. I really really tried, and I LOVE this band. Their last one "Everything Sucks" shocked me because it was so good. This one is just eh, though it's nice to hear the more political side of Milo and All with "'Merican".

Turbohund East Bay, ruff!

Product placement- The Frisk are proud to have donated an unreleased tune to the "Rock Against Bush Vol. 1" compilation on Fat Wreck. Go to www.thefrisk.com and www.adelinerecords.net for details about upcoming shows.

In my constant search for people who've dropped out of my life who I miss, I've joined "MySpace"- ack. You can read my- oh god, do I have a goatee yet?- blog there. Fuck me, I'm such a dweeb. If I've been looking for you, or if you've been looking for me, that's as good a place to contact me as anywhere else.

Stay strong, stay true, and always read between the lines!



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BLEEDING KANSAS

AN INTERVIEW WITH DRUMMER DANIEL POULIOT

By Kirby Unrest / Photography By Noah Ben-Eishai

What are the origins of Bleeding Kansas? What were your aspirations when you began and have they remained intact to this day?
Bleeding Kansas started with 4 dudes that wanted to play music together. We started simple and small, practicing and recording in my garage, playing shows whenever and wherever we could get them. As things progressed, things changed, but overall everything is the same. We still play wherever and whenever and we still just like making new friends, hanging out, and playing music.



Who came up with the band name and what does it mean to you individually/ collectively?
My girlfriend at the time, Meryl, actually came up with it. We didn't know what to call ourselves, so somehow when we were thinking about names, we came up with a few of them and one of them was 'Kill Kansas', and when Meryl heard that, she actually suggested 'Bleeding Kansas' and I brought it up with the rest of the dudes and told them what it was all about, and we agreed to stick with it.

How would you describe yourselves musically/lyrically to someone who had never heard you before?
I'm not good at describing how bands sound, let alone my own band, but people say that we sound like Botch, Black Flag, and Pg. 99. Some of the members of the band agree and disagree with those comparisons, but I can see where they come from. I think we fuse the vibe of Black Flag with the tempos and we all love Botch so much that their influence comes out too. I also think that bands like Drive Like Jehu and The Jesus Lizard are big influences in the beginning stages of the song writing process, but when we come together and play as a band, it sounds like our own. I don't think we sound like many other bands, but that's just me. Lyrically I would say they are very personal and have do deal a lot with situations and perspectives. For me, I see those as important factors in every day life, so I stand behind Ben's lyrics completely. I think they fit well with how we sound.

What were your reasons for signing with Abacus/Century Media? Is it because Ray Puffkins is the sexiest snugglebear alive? I'd fully understand if that's why.
Ha ha, while Ray is definitely in my top 5 top contenders, that wasn't the only reason we chose to work with Abacus. Bleeding Kansas has been a DIY band, which is how I've always dealt with bands that I've been in. We screen our own shirts, we book our own tours, and we've done a lot on our own with little or no help. Having said that, we don't "need" to be DIY, it's not something we stand behind completely, it just always seemed to work out for us. We needed help doing some things that we felt we needed to do as a band (buy a van, have a good recording) and we were thinking about seeking help from a label. Before we even sent out any promo packs and shit like that, Ray brought up the idea to us. I have been good friends with Ray for a long time, with him being in Taken, going bowling, and just hanging out and to be honest, being on a label like Abacus would normally make me nervous. There is so much shit that goes into a label like Abacus that I have no idea about, so since Ray was a good friend, there was trust to begin with. It just sort of rolled on and worked out. We are very happy with Abacus and everything they've done for us so far.

Your latest, "1859" seems very much to be a concept record. What are some of the ideas/themes behind it?
The music on 1859 is not a concept; it is simply the 7 songs we had written at the time that we felt were best for the ep. The artwork is definitely a concept. When we asked Dave and Adam from Empty Design to do the artwork, we were unsure of what we wanted. They researched our name and came up with a bunch of old info and pictures from the abolitionist movement and came up with some ideas, and we were all stoked on it. It turned out to be kind of like an old looking textbook which I think is awesome. It's a little different from most of the artwork of hardcore CDs around today.

Bleeding Kansas definitely seems to have a message, a desire for debate and interaction, as opposed to most hardcore/metal bands out there who seem only interested in singing about girls or "mascara tear angel kisses in the midnight sun of a blood red sky?" Have you always sought to bring some substance back to the scene?
Ha ha, nice lyrics! It's a weird situation for us to fit into the Hardcore and Metal scenes because we are a punk band. We play hardcore music, we play rock music, we play punk music, but ethically we are a punk band. I think that a lot of the bands around today are concerned with how they look, they're wearing eye shadow, they're working out and cutting the sleeves off their shirts, they're styling their hair before they play, and we think that stuff is FUCKING BULLSHIT. What I think it all comes down to is a band's reasons for playing music. We play music to have fun, make friends, rock out, and shit like that whereas a lot of those bands wearing make-up and stuff are possibly only in bands to get big, get money, or get girls.

Who designed the layout for "1859"?
Dave and Adam from Empty Design.
Best part of being in this band?
My favorite part is playing with bands I love, making friends, and traveling. I hope that we get to go to other countries to play too!

Most important film/book/record you've experienced recently?
Every time I read Herman Hesse's Siddhartha it gives me a fresh outlook on everything. It's a simple and short book, but it means a lot to me and even though it's really old, it has crazy similarities to my world today.

What are your tour plans in 2005?
We plan on doing lots of little "2 week" endeavors around the west and we will hit the entire US in the summer time. We're going to tour out to Boston, record a full length, then tour back home. We are really excited about this year; we are going to try our best to make it the best!

Any New Year's Resolutions?
To play high and drunk as much as I can.

Closing words?
If you want to get in touch with us or having any questions or comments, email us or visit us on the good 'ol internet!

bleedingkansas@gmail.com
www.bleedingkansas.net



DARKTHRONE - SARDONIC WRATH
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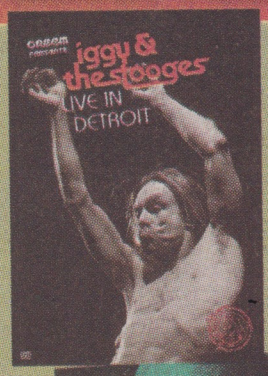
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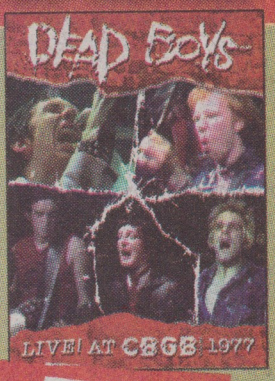


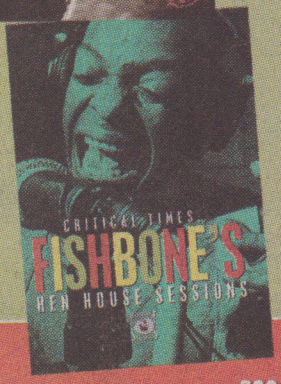
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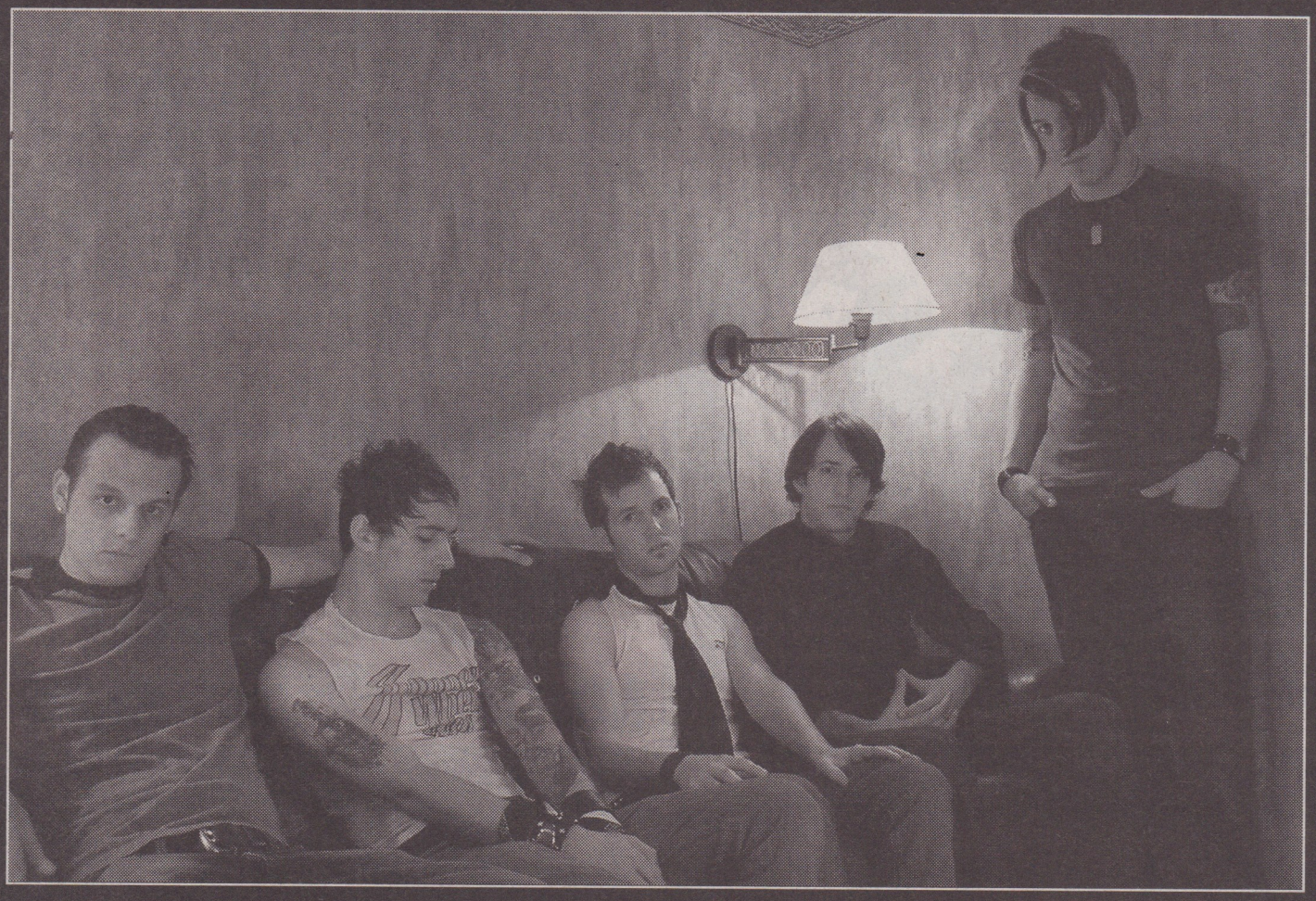
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ROSES ARE RED



An Interview with Vincent Minervino, vocalist of **Roses Are Red**

By Nick Brooks, vocalist of It Dies Today.

So tell me about yourself...
Well, my name is Vincent Minervino, I'm 21 years old and I'm the singer in Roses Are Red.

What is your favorite moment on your new record, *Conversations*?
Hmm.. It would be tough to pick out one favorite moment. I really honestly love our record from start to finish. We put so much of ourselves into writing and recording *Conversations* and the entire album is very much a special part of us.

Where do you see Roses Are Red in one year?
Ideally, we'd just love to be in the company of lots of friends, whatever city we're in. We've had the opportunity to meet so many amazing people in the places we've toured. And we're really looking forward to touring the world with some amazing bands this year and meeting more people around the world.

What is your favorite moment in Buffalo Bills history?
Definitely January 3rd of 1992 when the Bills made the largest comeback in NFL history against the Houston Oilers. That kept our super bowl dreams alive that year.

What is your least favorite moment in Buffalo Bills history?
Oh man. Does this even need to be asked? Wide right, man. I seriously cried. That's all I have to say.

What's in your CD player right now?
Let's see...
Acceptance - *Phantoms*
Hopesfall - *A Types* (new record is a different, yet amazing direction)
It Dies Today - (can I have your autograph, Nick?)
Underoath - *They're Only Chasing Safety* (great new record)
The Exit - *Home For An Island* (this band just blows my mind)

Thanks for the interview. Can I really have your autograph...seriously...

IT DIES TODAY



An Interview with Nick Brooks, vocalist of **It Dies Today**

By Minervino, vocalist of Roses Are Red.

So yeah, introduce yourself a little bit...
Hey there my name is Nicholas Brooks and I sing for It Dies Today, from Buffalo, NY. I am 20 years old and I am a Vincent Minervino super fan.

Tell me about the new album, *The Caitiff Choir*. How does is differ from your previous material?
Well, our new record is just a lot better than our old stuff basically. We decided to focus on writing actual structured songs as opposed to 7 min long metal core songs with 842,893 different parts. We also decided to incorporate a lot more melody.

What are your inspirations/ focuses lyrically?
Well, most of the concepts for this record were inspired by *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri. But most of my lyrics deal simply with human condition and the decline of decency and morality in the world. The other songs are about relationship stuff ...weird.

What is It Dies Today's collective goal as a band?
To be able to do what we love every day and just play to kids who care about our music as much as we love playing it.

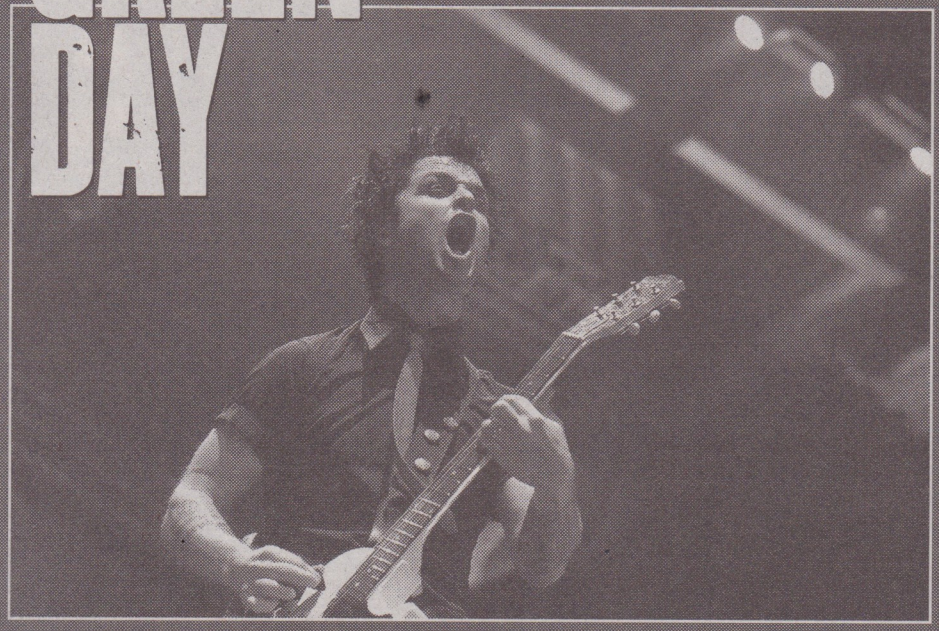
What is in your CD player right now?
Sevendust - *Seasons*
Mojave 3 - *Dead Hearts* demo
Hot Rod Circuit`s new one.

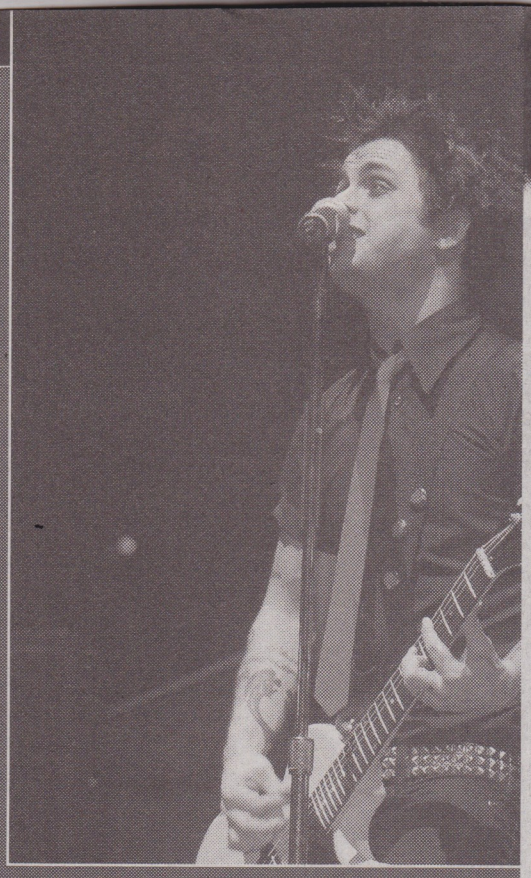
I'll give you the last word...
Thanks for the interview dog, everyone go pick up our new record *The Caitiff Choir* out now on Trustkill Records.

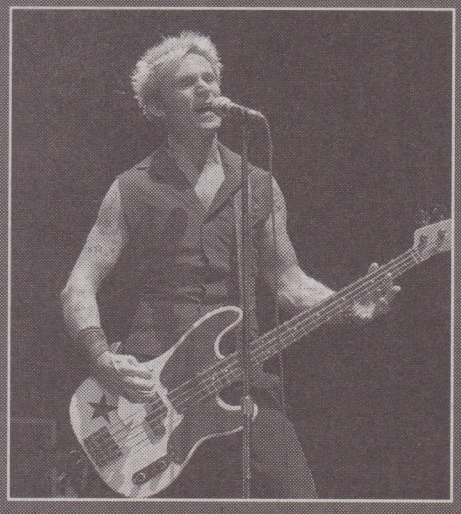
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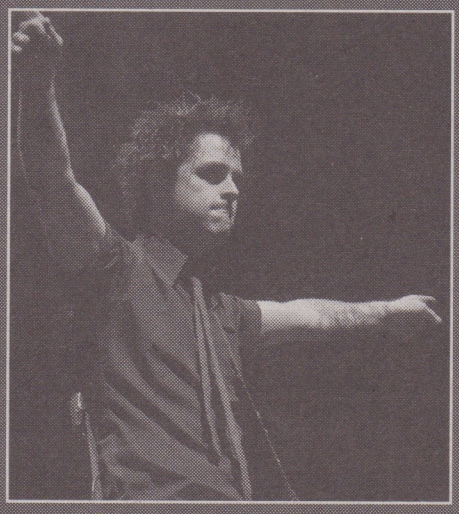
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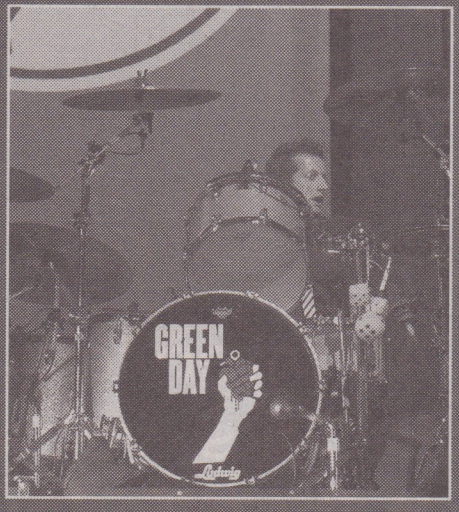
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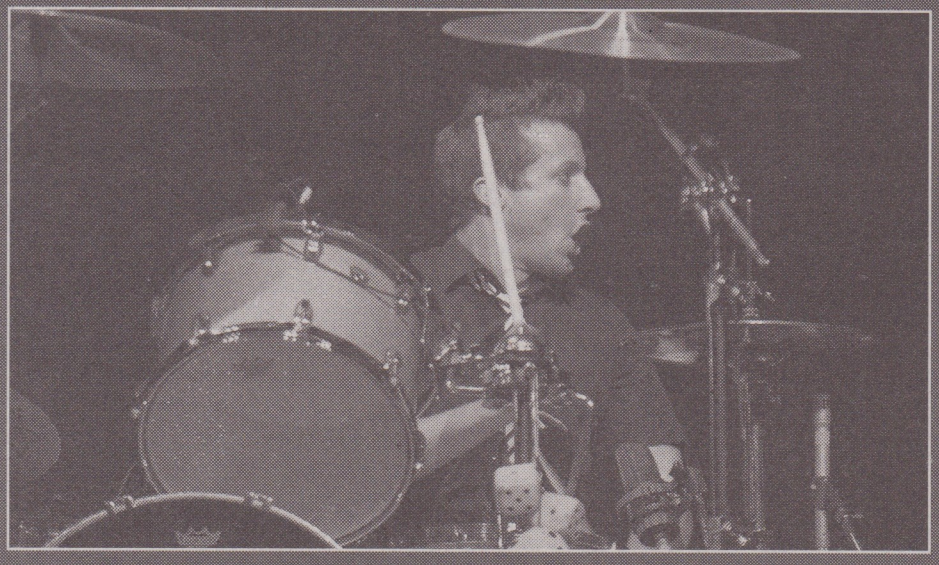


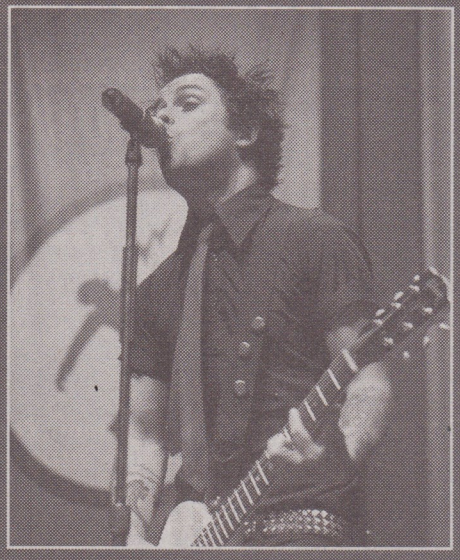




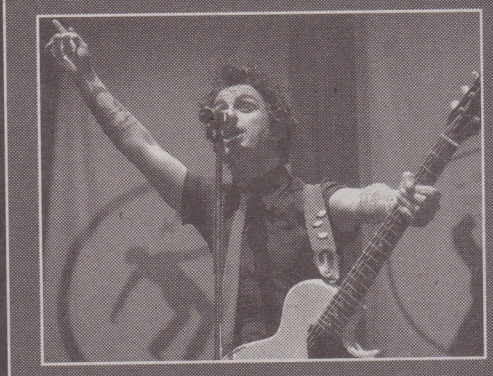


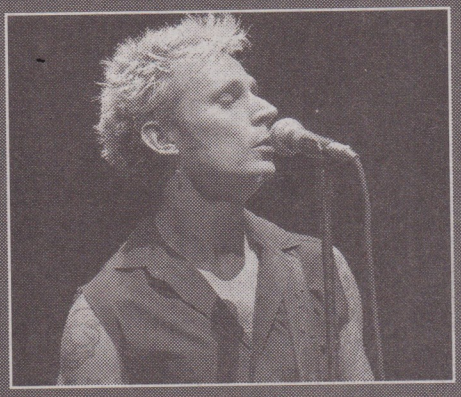


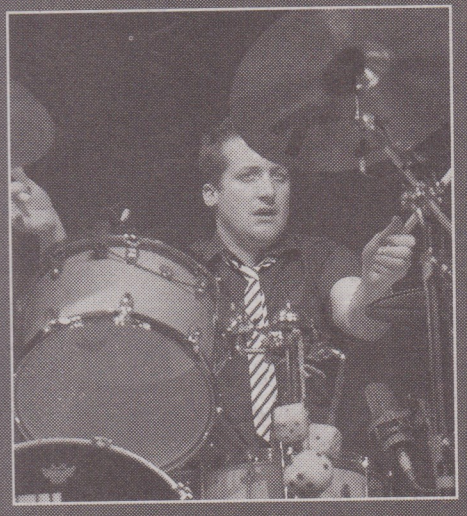


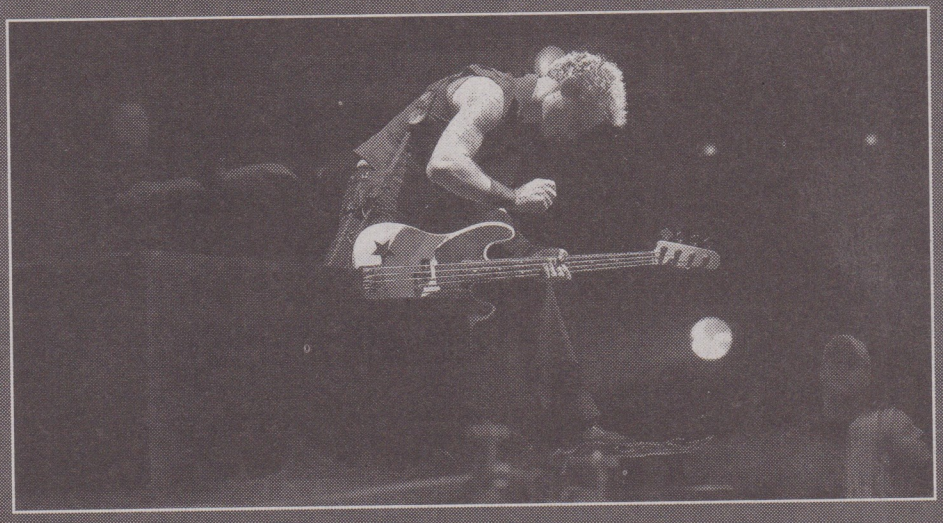


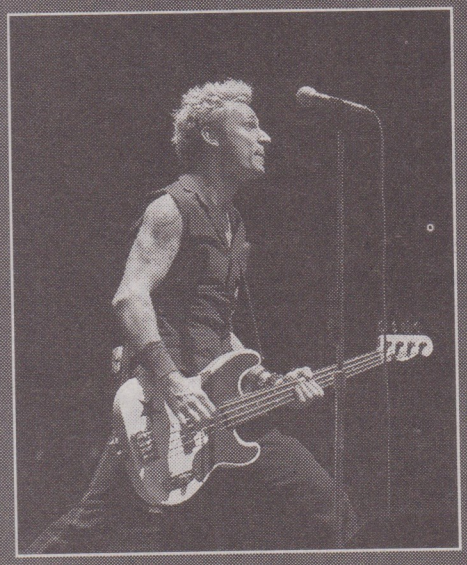

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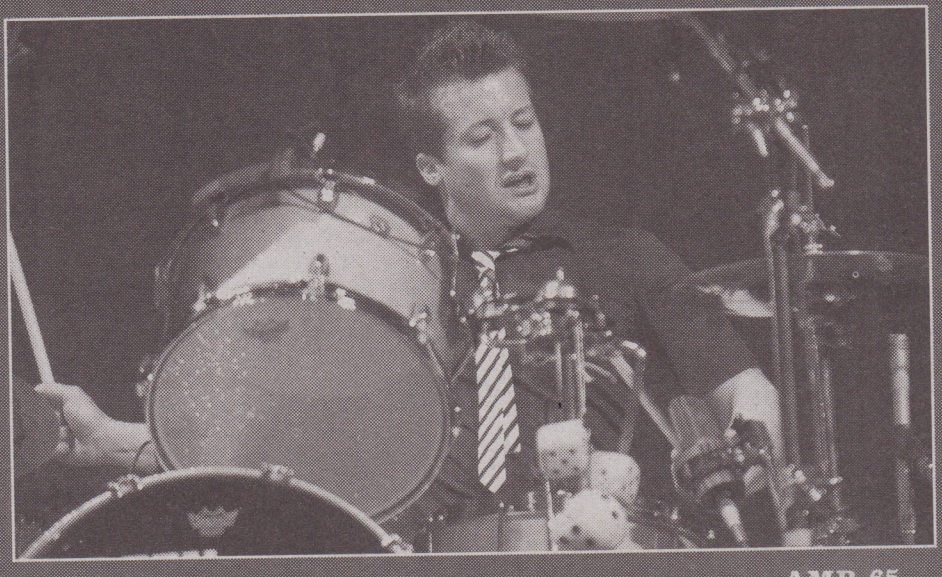












DRAG THE RIVER



By Rex Reason

Depending on how late it's getting and how many drinks have been chugged, certain names inevitably pop up when the conversation turns to "Who was the first punk?' Iggy Pop? No. Johnny Cash? No. Hank Williams? No. Lao Tzu? Wait—he was the first hippie.

A few salient facts quickly stand out. First, there's a reason intellectual punks don't have many friends. Second, there's also a reason why country icons (giving you enough credit to realize we're not talking about Garth Fucking Brooks) and their music resonate so powerfully with so many people who know that Milo went to college.

Fort Collins, Colorado-based Drag The River obviously realize that. The roots/ Americana/ don't-call-them-alt-country band features and has featured members of well- and lesser-known punk bands like the Descendents, All, the Nobodys and the woefully underappreciated Armchair Martian.

With artists like the Supersuckers and Mike Ness having released country-tinged or outright country albums, and major acts like Ryan Adams covering Black Flag songs, country from punk bands and vice versa is well-established.

Live, Drag is country harmonies, showboat rock drumming and bassist JJ Nobody's stomps punctuating the breaks Drag The River blazes right through genre conventions. The band seeds the set with slower songs to rein in the cowboy hats in the crowd; and co-singer/guitarist Chad Price (of All "fame") often sings with his eyes closed—maybe to concentrate, maybe out of shyness, but either way not just a pose. It verifies something long suspected: country music is white soul. As Price sings, "She brings me happiness in a bottle/ makes life easier to swallow"—in the darkness, you want to believe. The traffic laws may scream, "DON'T DRINK!" but Drag The River compels, "YOU MUST!"

I caught up with Drag The River singers Price and Jon Snodgrass at Zen Sushi in LA's hipster-fied Silverlake district and discussed the finer points of whiskey and Night Court over ebi and inari while bassist JJ, drummer Paul Rucker, and guitarist Chad Rex were back at the club.

HOW WAS SAN DIEGO?

Jon: Awesome.

DIDN'T THE VAN BREAK DOWN?

Jon: Yes. You know what though? JJ's awesome. He fixed the truck for $20 and they were trying to make us pay $600. Power steering and power brakes went out. He cut a quarter in half. I don't know, that's what he said. He went to a guy's machine shop with a machine press and all that and used that as the piece. They don't make that part anymore. But San Diego was great. We love it down there. Got to go swimming in the ocean. Actually, we went swimming but Chad went down there to take a shower.

SOAP AND EVERYTHING?

Chad: No, just water.

HOW DOES IT WORK HAVING FOUR SORT OF FRONTMEN IN THE BAND? JON AND CHAD SING IN DRAG THE RIVER, CHAD IN ALL, JON IN ARMCHAIR MARTIAN, AND THEN JJ SINGS IN HIS BANDS, CHAD REX SINGS IN HIS BAND...

Jon: Star-studded band.

NO EGOS?

Jon: No egos. Traveling Wilburys. I guess so. Don't write that. That's dumb.

YOU SAID IT.

Jon: I did say it. As long as there's a disclaimer of me saying that's dumb.

WHAT ABOUT WHEN YOU GUYS DO SHOWS WITH JUST JON AND CHAD? ARE THE OTHER GUYS COOL WITH THAT?

Jon: Yeah. That's been dubbed the Indigo Boys.

SO IS IT THE SAME BAND?

Jon: Yeah, it's the same band. It's our songs, just faggy.

IS THAT OK TO PUT IN, "FAGGY"?

Jon: I feel kind of faggy? Yeah.

SO WHAT DO PUNK AND COUNTRY HAVE TO DO WITH EACH OTHER, IF ANYTHING?

Jon: Simplicity.

(time elapses)

EVEN IN THE ANSWERS YOU GIVE TO INTERVIEWS?

Jon: Yup.

SO WHY HAS EVERYONE IN YOUR BAND BEEN IN PUNK BANDS AND COUNTRY BANDS?

Jon: I don't know. I'm sure that Paul Rucker ten years ago wouldn't believe us if we told him he'd be in a band like this now.

WAS PAUL A PUNKER KID?

Jon: No. He was metal, totally metal.

Chad: Still is.

WHAT ABOUT YOU GUYS, ARE YOU INTO METAL?

Jon: He (Chad) likes metal. I wasn't a big fan. I liked some stuff, I guess. I'm totally ignorant. I would ask him about these bands and I sounded like I was a kindergartener. I know nothing about the history of metal.

CHAD, WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE METAL BAND?

Chad: Iron Maiden.

Jon: See, I like Judas Priest, but I think they're more of a rock & roll band. They sound rock & roll to me. AC/DC – that's a rock & roll band. Motörhead...

BLACK SABBATH?

Jon: Black Sabbath - they're something else. They came up with something completely special. I like them a lot. I can't intelligently talk about Black Sabbath. I like it.

WHAT'S UP WITH EVERYONE'S OTHER BANDS?

Jon: They've become side projects.

Chad: Seems that way.

Jon: It's weird. I don't know.

WHAT ABOUT CHAD REX? IS HE FULL TIME NOW?

Jon: Yeah, as long as he wants to do it. Hopefully he wants to do it for a long time because he's awesome.

WHERE DOES HE LIVE?

Chad: Kansas City.

WITH THE REST OF THE BAND IN COLORADO DO YOU DO LOCAL SHOWS?

Jon: We've been doing 4 piece shows.

SO IS THERE SOMETHING ABOUT THE SONGS WHERE YOU CAN LOSE A PEDAL STEEL PLAYER OR PLAY AS A 2 PIECE OR WITH THE FULL BAND NO PROBLEM?

Jon: A song's a song.

Chad: It's just a song.

SO WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR PEDAL STEEL PLAYER ZACK?

Jon: He got accepted into this writing program he wanted to get into for a couple years. It's really hard to get into, so it's something he couldn't pass up.

CHAD, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF JON'S SONGWRITING?

Chad: I think it's good.

JON, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF CHAD'S SONGWRITING?

Jon: It's decent.

WHAT DOES HE NEED TO WORK ON THEN?

Jon: The lyrics and the music a little bit. No, it's awesome. I feel so fortunate to play with him.

SO DID WERE YOU GUYS BUDDIES BEFORE THE BAND?

Chad: It was weird because we were both from Kansas City and met in Fort Collins, which I don't remember why or how we did, but-

Jon: You came into the record store where I worked.

Chad: I guess one day we must have started talking about Hank Williams Jr. and yeah, we just started playing together at some point.

SO DID YOU GUYS BECOME FRIENDS AND THEN START PLAYING, OR START PLAYING AND THEN BECOME FRIENDS?

Jon: do you want to talk about what great buddies we are or something? (laughs)

NOT EXACTLY. IT'S JUST THAT YOU BOTH SING AND PLAY ACOUSTIC GUITARS IN THE BAND AND HAVE SIMILAR VOCAL REGISTERS, SO I'M WONDERING HOW THIS CAME TOGETHER. I'M NOT CALLING YOU GAY OR ANYTHING.

Jon: We already tried that and it didn't work.

SO WHY DO PEOPLE LIKE DRAG THE RIVER?

Jon: I don't know that they do.

SOME PEOPLE DO.

Chad: Everybody can relate. And they like to drink.

EVER PLAY AN ALL AGES SHOW WITH NO BAR?

Jon: Not only did we play a place with no bar, but we played a place that was in a dry county.

YOU HAD TO PLAY SOBER?

Jon: No.

Chad: We somehow got a few cases of beer.

Jon: It was pretty cool for us. It was like a young kid who ran the place whose dad got the lease. But the dad was super cool. The kid was cool to us, but the dad was like, "you can drink beer back here!"

HAVE YOU EVER PLAYED TOTALLY SOBER?

Jon: Yes. It was 2 in the afternoon and we played with Spot in Milwaukee.

HOW WAS IT?

Chad: Miserable.

THE OTHER NIGHT YOU GUYS PLAYED A PRETTY WEIRD, MIXED BILL. IS THAT TYPICAL?

Chad: Almost always, yes.

Jon: There are a lot of weird bands that are interested in playing with us and are friends of ours. We like to have a mixed bag of bands. Who wants to go to a show and see the same kind of bands play all night.

WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU NEVER GET TO TALK ABOUT IN THIS CONTEXT?

Jon: Night Court. No one ever talks about Night Court. But, I have to go to the bathroom.

CHAD, WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE TV SHOW NO ONE TALKS ABOUT?

Chad: Wonder Years. I love it.

DIDN'T YOU WRITE A SONG ABOUT THE WONDER YEARS?

Chad: It's not technically about the Wonder Years. It's inspired by it.

WHICH SONG?

Chad to friend Brian Longfellow: Which Song?

Brian: I don't know. You wrote it.

Chad: Um... "Alive". (from All's album Problematic)

IS THAT THE ONLY SONG' YOU'VE BEEN INSPIRED BY A TV SHOW OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

Chad: I wrote another one where I got the idea from the movie Fried Green Tomatoes.

WHICH SONG?

Chad: "Stick" (form All's Breaking Things album). You probably won't even notice it.

Jon: (returning) What was the question?

WE WERE TALKING ABOUT HIS FAVORITE TV SHOWS NO ONE TALKS ABOUT SINCE YOU MENTIONED NIGHT COURT.

Jon: Millennium!

ARE YOU GUESSING?

Jon: His favorite TV show no one talks about is Millennium.

WAS THAT THE X-FILES SPIN-OFF?

Chad: Yes. I think it went off the air. For some reason no one liked that show, but I thought it was far superior to the X-Files.

(TO JON) WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THE WONDER YEARS, AND HE SAID HE'D WRITTEN A SONG INSPIRED BY IT.

Jon: That's Millennium.

HE WROTE A SONG ABOUT MILLENNIUM?

Chad: Yes, I did. "So Lonely".

SO I SHOULD GET A LIST OF YOUR SONGS AND ASK WHICH SHOWS THEY WERE INSPIRED BY?

Chad: Yeah.

BACK TO NIGHT COURT, WHICH LADY BAILIFF DID YOU LIKE BETTER?

Jon: The little old lady.

HOW DO FEEL ABOUT JACK DANIELS BEING LOWERED FROM 86 PROOF TO 80 PROOF?

Jon: I don't really care because I don't drink Jack Daniels. I like Jim Beam. What was the question when I got up to go to the bathroom?

ABOUT SOMETHING YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT THAT NO ONE EVER ASKS YOU.

Jon: Oh yeah, about our good looks. No one ever talks about our good looks.



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RUSS RANKIN

REALITY BITES

I know I'm in the minority on this subject but fuck it, maybe there needs to be a minority opinion out there somewhere. So-called 'reality television.' I absolutely cannot stand it and I'd like to think my reasons are deeper than just the usual "oh, I think it's lame" recourse most common among those of us who share this view.

I feel as though this particular genre of television serves only to marginalize and, in some ways, dehumanize us and taint the ways in which we relate to each other as human beings. When the foibles of one become the entertainment of another the empathetic thread which binds us begins to deteriorate. The more we see our brothers and sisters belittled and destroyed on camera the more grateful you and I will begin to feel that it isn't us up there. A subtle superiority begins to creep into our subconscious and we are able, for a fleeting moment, to forget how unhappy we are with our own lives. This cycle can and will perpetuate itself unhindered until we are no longer able to distinguish reality from fiction when objectively viewing our own place in the thread of humanity.

The worse we feel about ourselves the more we turn to these televised dunking booths for instant, yet temporary, relief from our malaise. I believe comedy has a place in our culture and I would submit that much of comedy's appeal stems from our ability to empathize and, on a massive level, laugh at our collective selves. I also feel that most of these 'reality' shows cross that comedic line and are grossly inappropriate and are, as I've pointed out, actually damaging in the long run.

Another issue I have with these shows is that they deign to make 'stars' out of everyday people with no background in entertainment. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that Americans are, by enlarge, obsessed with the institution of celebrity. Put a light and a camera anywhere where Americans are gathered and they will fall over each other clamoring to get on TV. Look at the long lines of gawkers at any event or awards show where celebrities are expected to attend; everybody straining to catch even a fleeting glimpse of somebody famous.

With this cultural predication towards being trained to adore certain people in society is it any wonder that the unfortunate "contestants" on reality television shows actually believe it will be there big break to stardom? Haven't we, as an idol-worshipping culture, set this ball in motion? I believe so and therefore we end up with people who now employ agents, managers and the like in an attempt to further their so-called 'careers' and cash in on their happenstance celebrity. Many even go so far as to enlist writers to pen tepid memoirs of their inane rise to cultural idolatry.

I suppose it's fitting in a way that many of these average citizens who have risen to national fame via signing up to be televised crash test dummies are now being recycled back into the whole maelstrom of stupidity as hosts of their own, ever more horrific 'reality' shows. Thus the cycle perpetuates itself yet again and we as a society will never be in short supply of the next celebrity-obsessed monkey willing to eat bugs or demean themselves in other ways for the consumption of the general population in order to 'get famous.'

Is it worth it? Are these people happier for the experience? Many have argued that 'reality TV' is harmless fun and I suppose it's all relative – I mean, television, much like music and politics for instance, is an extremely objective arena but I really believe it is a cancer to our already distressed culture and may, even now, be causing irreparable damage to our collective souls.

NO END IN SIGHT

With the unfortunate events currently unfolding in Iraq it's no surprise that people are beginning to throw around the inevitable comparisons with the conflict in Vietnam. Conservative hawks laugh at such parallels and are quick to point out all of the seeming achievements and/or 'moral' victories in our current campaign. "They are holding elections!" they say; the question seems never to be asked 'did they even want elections?' why this ready obsession to literally force other countries to do the business of self-government our way? What if they don't want to be 'free' or 'democratic?' what if they see right through our bullshit and know that these media-friendly terms are only a smoke screen for a multi-national corporate invasion of their sovereign resources and an outright theft of their culture and identity?

The U.S. media is keeping a positive spin on things in Iraq, which is to be expected (since the majority of the mainstream media outlets here in America are owned by a tiny group of rich, white conservatives), but a glance around the world's news outlets paints a much different picture of what we have come to know as "operation Iraqi freedom," albeit a decidedly bleaker one.

Many in the region now estimate the number of Iraqi civilians killed at close to 100,000 and the number of u.s. servicemen and women killed in action has already topped any casualty totals since Vietnam. The darkest fact of all is that there appears to be no break in the downward spiral; no light at the end of the bush administration's long, dark tunnel.

Thousands of grieving families left with more questions than answers as to why exactly they had to make the ultimate sacrifice. Billions of tax dollars dumped into the war coffers with zero accountability and a complete free ride from the supposed democratic 'doves' in congress. One begins to wonder if the entire country is in the grips of some massive acid trip led by the commander in chief. If not then how can we explain the general apathy of an entire population while our government leads us further and further down into a full scale military quagmire which may end up making Vietnam look like a vacation by comparison.

Marine Sgt. Jimmy Massey recently testified, "I do know that we killed innocent civilians." He also remarked "I was never clear on who was the enemy and who was not. When you don't know who the enemy is, what are you doing there?" What indeed?

MEET THE NEW BOSS

In the wake of the December housecleaning in the bush cabinet it seems clear that we are in for an even more conservative, pro-war hawkfest over the course of the next four years than the previous term. With deliberate execution and with an alarmingly small amount of media fanfare or popular uproar, Mr. Bush is setting the gears in motion to ultimately provide himself with a cabinet full of like-minded "yes" men (and women) who will not only fail to reign in and balance his skewed perception but who may, in fact, up the ante towards achieving what appears to be his primary agenda of global hegemony.

Replacing the relatively moderate Colin Powell with someone like Condi Rice is merely the first step; a hint of things to come. Where Mr. Powell fretted over the legitimacy of Mr. Bush's Iraqi adventure and was clearly uncomfortable when pressed to publicly endorse it, rice couldn't be any more gung ho if she tried. By surrounding himself with other war-crazed yahoos the president has removed any voice of reason or possible dissent from his entourage; a frightening proposition for freedom-minded Americans as well as leaving the rest of the world wondering if they will be next on the hit list.

You know, even I couldn't possibly imagine a replacement for attorney general John Ashcroft who could be any worse than Ashcroft himself. This was going to be one cabinet seat whose new occupant ought to actually rate lower on the "crazy" meter than his or her predecessor. Surely there could be no one worse than the last guy.

Meet Alberto Gonzales, White House Counsel and Attorney General nominee. Oh man… could it be that Mr. Bush actually found someone even more ill-suited to serve America?

A few golden moments from the public career of Mr. Gonzales include his vehement support of the 1996 defense of Marriage Act in which Congress said states don't have to recognize gay marriages. He also supported the USA Patriot Act and is playing dumb about being a possible Supreme Court nominee in the near future – a move sure to please neo-cons everywhere.

During the day-long confirmation hearing Gonzales repeatedly came under fire (sometimes even friendly fire from fellow republicans) for his dubious role in the various cases of torture and abuse of prisoners in U.S. custody. Gonzales seems to think that, since Al-Qaida and other terrorist organiza-

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tions weren't signatory to the Geneva Convention that they are therefore exempt from its humanitarian protections.

The nominee apparently feels that taking the moral high ground, a position the united states seems to be forever claiming (at least publicly), isn't the way to go in the so-called 'war on terror' and that the U.S. would be somehow better served to sink to the basest levels of human attrition displayed by these terrorist organizations.

Now, maybe it's just the liberal in me, but when the future attorney general of the united states is able to flippantly condone torture and other inhumane conduct by our troops and members of the intelligence community AND still be confirmed by a bi-partisan congressional panel then we are in serious trouble folks.

I find the current administration's flip flop on the Geneva Convention most interesting. The U.S. will always be the first in line to wave this document around in order to drum up support for a campaign against various "evil-doers" the world over; self-righteously listing the litanies of horrific abuses these despots have perpetrated on their poor, freedom-hungry populations and yet, when we find ourselves caught, red-handed, guilty of the same abuses we bring in a litigator like Gonzales to explain it all away.

As White House Counsel, he argued in a memo that the war on terrorism "renders obsolete Geneva's strict limitations on questioning of enemy prisoners and renders quaint some of its provisions." Basically meaning that, once again, the rules for international conduct are different for the United States. Seemingly any and all international treaties are now subject to be disavowed of any binding legitimacy as long as we can say we are fighting terror or "liberating" someone. We have become the kid who, frustrated at losing a game, decides to change the rules. The crass immaturity of such a position alone is, in my view, a legitimate cause for concern as a citizen for, if these internationally recognized laws can be so easily disregarded by the men entrusted at the highest levels to enforce them, what does it mean to the dissenting American? How soon until people like me are shipped off to Guantanamo Bay as "enemy combatants?"

Indeed it would appear that Mr. Gonzales himself may have set the ball rolling on this unfolding scandal as evidenced by a remark made by senator Kennedy (democrat from Massachusetts) during the confirmation hearing; "the legal positions that you have supported have been used by the (Bush) administration, the military and the CIA to justify torture and Geneva Convention violations by military and civilian personnel." As President Bush's White House Counsel, Gonzales was also at the center of decisions about what Democratic Senator Pat Leahy termed "the legality of detention and interrogation methods that have been seen as tantamount to torture."

Yet even with all the posturing by the panel of senators, most expect Mr. Gonzales's confirmation to be swift and unchallenged – much like the speedy confirmation of bush family ass-kisser and professional hawk Condi Rice. And so it goes.

STRAIGHT EDGE: TRUE TILL THIRTYSOMETHING

Recently a straight edge friend of mine (albeit one I don't see or interact with on a regular basis) asked me if I was smoking now. I recoiled in horror at such a question. "What?" I said, "Where did you hear that?",

As it turns out this friend didn't hear it anywhere – they were just asking. So many of us have lost our edge as we creep into middle age that it has apparently become not only accepted but expected of us.

It got me thinking about straight edge and my involvement in it. This friend cited two distinct cases; old friends of mine. Both were self-professed vegan and/or vegetarian straight edgers at one time complete with tattoos and a history of perpetuating the lifestyle among their friends and followers. Both eat meat and smoke now. Of course they are still my friends and always will be no matter what but I began to take a look at the whole ideal of being straight edge forever and asking myself how many of us truly will achieve it.

For my own part I have been drug/alcohol free and vegan for several years. it has become so engrained into my thinking and my day to day life that it seldom even crosses my mind. I had a bit of experience with alcohol as a teenager and it was all bad so I have never really had the desire to revisit that lifestyle. Drug free is, for me, better and way less stressful than the alternative. That being said, however, I would like to think that I have outgrown the inevitable self-righteousness so prevalent among edge kids when I first got into it. My ideal is to live and let live, to each his own and so on.

But what about those people who became straight edge, told the whole world about it and then weren't anymore? Where do they leave us? My friend's question about whether or not I had started smoking yet showed me that there is a real credibility gap growing in people's perception of straight edge – both the movement in general and the people who have, at one time or another, boldly claimed it to be their own.

Another edge friend of mine once said that the "people who talked the loudest (about being straight edge) always fell the hardest." And my experience has born that out. I can vividly recall spending every weekend at Gilman sSreet in Berkeley attending hardcore matinee shows where many of the bands at the time were marketing themselves as straight edge (I found out years later that few, if any, actually were). Among these bands there was one in particular that I really grew to like. Their message was so passionate and their drug-free stance so stringent that they were sometimes labeled straight edge fascists. I didn't care. They came across as dedicated as I was and I would anxiously wait for the next time they would be playing.

Spearheading their presentation was their singer. Tall, broad shouldered, crew cut… the prototypical straight edge guy of the day. Each song of their set was preceded by a lengthy speech which he would present with deliberate passion as he paced the stage from side to side. The band got better and better and grew in popularity every time I saw them and this singer quickly became my own personal hero. He was like a comic book character, fighting the good fight – seemingly infallible, pure and beyond corruption. Then the band broke up and, after a while, he wasn't even straight edge anymore. It was a harsh wake up call for me but a valuable lesson.

Without even realizing I was doing it I had placed this person on a pedestal. I had selfishly disregarded his humanity and, therefore, his innate fallibility. By creating a self-serving persona for this person I'd never even met I had denied him the ability to change his mind. I took a mental snapshot of everything I believed him to be and kept it sterile, frozen in time unchanging when, in fact, life is seldom like that. People grow up, people change their minds; I began to wonder just who I thought I was that I should consider it an insult that he or anyone else decided to not be straight edge anymore.

I have been straight edge when it was cool. I have also been straight edge when it wasn't. one thing I have attempted to practice is a genuine humility about it and a lack of judgment. Straight edge may not be for everyone and it is definitely not for me to decide whether someone is any less of a person just because they happen to have changed their mind about their involvement in the lifestyle.

A few years ago some edge friends and I were joking about how, if any of us sold out our edge, the others would find us and kick our ass. Two of those friends are no longer straight edge and, to my knowledge, haven't had their asses kicked yet as a result. They are still my friends and always will be. In my view, these bonds of friendship ought to reach beyond something as subjective and petty as one's personal choice to drink liquor or smoke cigarettes. There will always be good people who drink and there will always be assholes who don't.

I guess I have finally attained some sort of perspective on this (at least I hope so) and I no longer care or am surprised by who is or isn't straight edge anymore. I believe one's character cannot be determined solely by their lifestyle choices and whether these choices are in line with the popular social mores of the time. Despite all its seemingly sincere rhetoric with regards to the concepts of friendship and open-mindedness, I believe many of us in the straight edge movement have fallen prey to the same self-righteous intolerance which had driven us here in the first place. To carelessly admit or deny someone the same decency and respect one would want for themselves based on whether or not that person is straight edge or not is ultimately to deny one's self of an opportunity to make a new friend and to put into practice the very principles we so publicly embrace. ↖

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SMOKE OR FIRE



Interviewed by Tim Barry on New Years Eve in Richmond, Virginia's Oregon Hill neighborhood / Photo By Chrissy Piper

I first met Smoke or Fire at Krazy Fest in Louisville, Kentucky a few years ago. They weren't playing. They were drinking in the hotel room next to mine. I helped them finish off the beer that filled their bathtub and we got to know each other quickly. They still lived in Boston back then and were still called Jericho. The next thing I know I'm 12 hours into a 24 hour shift out in Nelson County, Virginia, taking down a huge stage after a Kenney Chesney concert. I realize that members of Smoke or Fire are among the many grunt workers on the call. It turns out the band had relocated to Virginia. Then I found myself in Philadelphia at the U Church on tour with my band AVAIL. Our opening band had decided to break up without notice and we were stuck with no one to finish the tour. I called the guys from Smoke or Fire in a last ditch effort to find a band to fill the slot. They showed up the day after in Chapel Hill, NC at the Cat's Cradle ready to go. Sometimes I think that all those guys want to do is make music, to the point of blatant disregard of home life, outside relationships and financial security. Bands like Smoke or Fire don't come around too often. They are punk without being "punk." They are indie without being wimpy. They are hardcore without kickboxing. They are country without the drawl. But most important of all, they play with heart and without the bullshit gimmicks that most bands depend on nowadays.

Let's start with something relevant. People here on the East Coast know you guys as either Jericho, or Jericho RVA. What is the new band name?

Joe: Smoke or Fire, which came at the last minute because another band named Jericho had the rights to the name.

So the other band named Jericho is from Northern Virginia and they are a Christian rock band, right? How long had y'all had the band name Jericho?

Joe: Six years or so.

And you guys at one point actually searched the internet and found that another band, this Christian rock band had the same name, and you contacted them?

Joe: The first time that we contacted them was when we put out an EP on Iodine Records and I think they had been a band about the same exact amount of time that we had. But at the time, a bunch of bands had been getting sued, American Nightmare, The Curse, and there was another one. These bands were getting sued and losing their money to cover bands. A Grateful Dead cover band called Slipknot sued the other Slipknot and they got a bunch of money.

That's unbelievable.

Joe: So we contacted them [the other Jericho] because Casey at Iodine was like, "You guys need to take care of this before we put out the record." So we contacted them and they wanted money then and we were like, "We don't have any money" and we were like, "What if we just add something to the name?" And they said, "If you add something to the name than that's cool with us." So we added 'RVA.' We figured that's where we are from and we could add it onto flyers below our name and that would ease people into the name change. And so that was fine and we put out the EP and then when it came to the new release on Fat Wreck we obviously needed something in writing,

so I contacted them again and told them what the situation was and they and they said, "No problem, we don't care, as long as you guys alter the spelling." And we said, "We just need you to sign a mutual agreement form that says we won't sue you and you won't sue us cause Fat Wreck needs it before we put out the record." They said no problem and we sent it over. Then they contacted Fat Wreck Chords and said, "We want money." And they wanted the right to cancel the contract and the agreement at anytime.

And you guys said?
Joe: Fuck that! We're not going through that. So we had one week to change our name.

I guarantee if it wasn't for the internet neither party would have even found out about one another. Anyway, how long had you guys been searching for a record label that may be a step above your former label Iodine before you hooked up with Fat?
Joe: Well, we had been sent contracts from pretty much the beginning but we turned them all down.
Jeremy: When we were getting those contracts we were all too young and didn't have our shit straight. And we were too young to get involved seriously with anybody. But after we finished recording this last project we started sending it out right a way. We recorded for free, for the time being anyway. New Alliance [studio in Boston] let us do that, and we ran up a bill and we just kind of crossed our fingers that someone would pick it up.

OK, real quick, before we get too far ahead. The new name of the band which many know as Jericho or Jericho RVA is...?
Joe: Smoke or Fire, and the record that will be released on Fat in late March will be called "Above the City."

So how excited were you guys to get on Fat Wreck?
Joe: Amazingly stoked. Jeremy didn't believe me. I was sitting in my apartment in my boxers playing video games and Fat Mike called me and pretty much cut to the chase and said that he loved the record and wanted to put it out and we talked for a while. Then I called up Jeremy and told him and he thought I was playing a joke on him and he wasn't amused.

Let's jump subjects. You now live in Richmond Virginia, and have lived here for a couple of years, but you are all originally from up north, right?
Joe: Two of us are from New Hampshire, Two from Mass.

So growing up there, what kind of bands did you guys go see play and what kind of influence did they have on y'all as a band?
Jeremy: I didn't start going to shows until I was in my last year of high school. Where I'm from there wasn't shit. I mean Joe and I grew up in Western Mass and that is further west than Springfield and there is more state and people don't seem to realize that. So when we started go to shows, we either went to an all age's hardcore show in Boston at the Middle East or in a church, and that was Bane or Converge, all that stuff. But the only thing I remember seeing in those years that blew me away was when Hot Water Music played a church. That was the first time I saw them and that was about a year before they put out No Division.
Joe: Jeremy was living in Amherst, and I lived in Boston and he would come up to play or to go to shows and stuff, and the hardcore scene in Boston was huge. It was crazy and it was like you couldn't go to all the shows you wanted to. In a week there'd be nine shows that were good and you couldn't possibly go to all the shows you wanted to.

But you ended up leaving the Boston area. Were you not feeling the music? Or was it the cost of living? Give me some sort of explanation of why all of y'all uprooted and moved down to a city like Richmond, Virginia?
Joe: We basically realized that we couldn't do what we wanted to do with the band up there. We had enough of a hard time paying our rent where we were living just working Monday thru Friday. And so to take time off to go on tour didn't work. The one time we tried to go out on the road our engine seized up in our van on the third show and we missed the whole tour. We pretty much got to the point where we were self destructing. We were fighting amongst ourselves and not over creative differences or personalities or anything like that, it was pretty much money. We didn't have a van, we didn't have money, and people couldn't get time off to practice from there jobs. We pretty much got to the point that we either do this, or we don't. Either we move somewhere were we can afford to do this or we stop, because we can't half ass it.

So as a group y'all made a conscience decision to get the fuck out of an area that is really well known for its high cost of living and move to an area that is known for being more accommodating to artists and people in bands. And not only did all the band members move down from the Boston area and into a huge house on Lombardy street, here in Richmond, Virginia, but also Jonathan who does AK Press books distribution moved down, as did Burt from Boxing Water. And eventually the rest of Boxing water moved down from up north, some of whom lived in the house as well. Tell me about the Lombardy Street house. How many people lived there? What else went on? You guys had an AK press book distro there, Jericho was living and working out of the house and you guys hosted shows to small touring bands?
Jeremy: I think at one point there was nine of us living there. The house was seven rooms, but it really only had 4 bedrooms. One on the bottom floor and three upstairs and we just kinda put someone in everywhere.

Did you feel welcome right off, or did you feel conflict or anything like that?
Jeremy: No we didn't feel any conflict. We were down maybe the first night and people just came by our house.
Joe: People were just stopping by.
Jeremy: Our house, the Lombardy St house was kind of notorious for being a punk house so people just stopped by.

Yeah, Randy from Lamb of God and my band mate Gwomper [from AVAIL] both lived there at times...
Jeremy: Yeah, and I think people were just curious, 'cause the house was empty for a year and than all of a sudden there are 8 or 9 dirty punk kids living in this house and hanging out on the porch and people were like, "what the hell is going on here" so we ran into people right away. And then by doing stage hand jobs, which many of us did when a rock show, or play or corporate event would come through town, we'd get work, and by doing those jobs we ran into a lot of the really good people from Richmond. So we got real lucky with the people we met early on.
Joe: Plus one of the first shows that we had at our house was Planes Mistaken For Stars. We moved in with the intention to practice and have shows out of our house. We didn't know how it would go with cops and stuff. But we had Planes and tons of people showed up and it went well and pretty much from then on people knew about the house. And it was amazing, we had shows there for two years and it ended this past year. We had the last show there and our land lord refused to renew

the lease and we all went our separate ways. The last show was really sad, but we had two years of free shows, it was all donations, no cops ever showed up to one show, it was free beer and all ages and everyone was welcome and there were no problems.

A lot of people, including myself really miss y'alls old house and its importance to the community.
Joe: On top off all that, the house allowed the band to have a place to practice. We decided there that we were gonna get serious and we were gonna sit down and write a record. We practiced in Jeremy's bedroom everyday for about six months and we wrote around 25 songs and ended up recording sixteen and we put out twelve.

Tell me about the recording, y'all went back up north and recorded in Boston?
Joe: Yup.

And who did you record with and why did you decide to go up there instead of recording here in Richmond at Sound of Music or a smaller cheaper studio like Minimum Wage to demo the stuff?
Joe: Money constraints and time constraints. Ethan Dussualt at New Alliance had recorded the EP with us in 3 days. And they were fronting us 2 weeks and who ever will pick it up will pay for it. And we were kinda like, we know him, we are familiar with him, we love working with him and if we can do an EP in three days, than in two weeks, as long as we are tight, we can get what we want done.

Basically you guys took a financial risk, and the guy that you were recording with had enough faith in you to say, "Alright, fuck it, we're going to block out two weeks for you guys to record and you can pay us later."
Jeremy: Yeah, it's amazing. Alvin Long, the owner of New Alliance studio in Boston deserves credit too. You know Ethan was the engineer and he was there, but Alvin is the owner of a prominent Boston studio who gave us two weeks and that's kind of unheard of.

So it turned out that Fat Mike really liked the recording. But he wanted you guys to tweak certain things. What did he ask you to change?
Joe: He called us before a two month tour and asked us to come out to San Francisco to add some low harmonies to the vocals and add a few guitar parts and I think he really just wanted to meet us, too. I think that was a big part of it. Because we had never met any of them. Fat is a really tight knit family over there and I think that he definitely wanted to put some faces to the music, which totally makes sense, and we wanted to meet them, too. So we toured for two months, me and Jeremy were home for a day and we flew out to SF and went into the studio with Mike. We spent three days there going over the songs or whatever and we tried out whatever Mike wanted to do and we tried out whatever we wanted to do and ended up only staying in the studio for like a day and a half. Then the recording went back to mixing.

And then you drank the rest of the time.
Joe: Yeah, basically. It was a blast.

So here's a Fat Mike quote. We were talking about y'all the other day and he said something like, "They are alcoholics. That means they are lifers. That means all they are going to do is make good music." How you feel about people like Fat Mike calling you guys alcoholics and using substance abuse as proof that you will continue to make great records?
Joe: When we were in the studio with him, we were there to get stuff done. And we got it done. We ended up staying an extra day in SF to go see Fabulous Disaster play at a bar in town and we got to hang out with Mike and drink with him and he was really happy, and we were stoked too, and we got to drink and have fun. He seemed really excited about the fact that we were complete drunks. He said, "I am so happy, I didn't know the Against Me guys, and we signed them and they are an amazing band and complete drunks, and you guys are too," and he was so happy about it.

You mentioned Against Me. What are your future plans? I know that they factor in there somewhere.
Jeremy: First off, we are going out with Me First and the Gimmie Gimmies for three days. DC, New York, and Boston. And that just kinda popped up out of nowhere. I know that I was surprised. But I'm stoked, the shows are gonna be way bigger than we're used to.

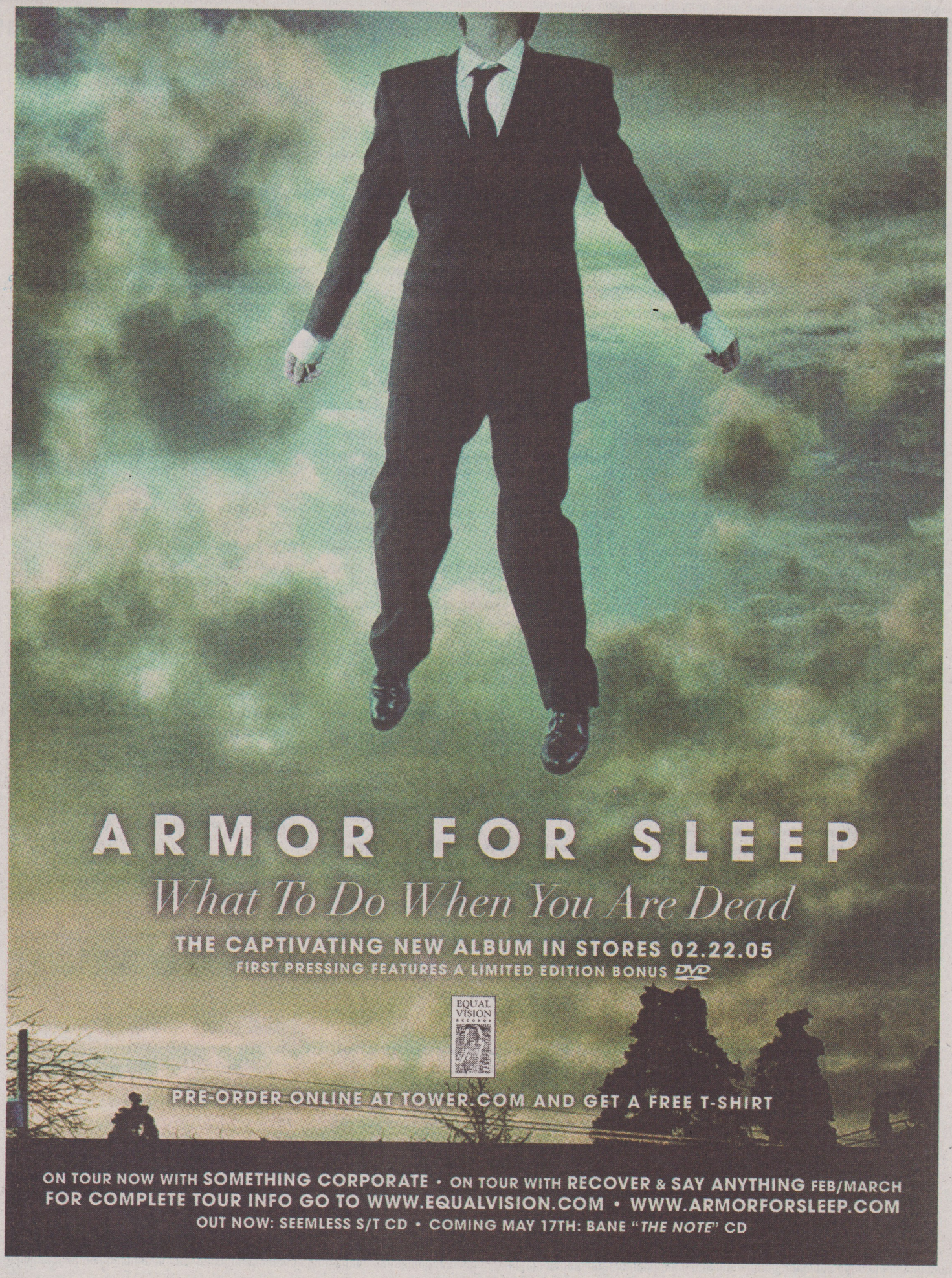
How do you anticipate something like that? You guys are a band that grew up like many, playing dive bars and basements or wherever the hell else you could get a show, and now you are going to be playing in front of far more than a few hundred people.
Jeremy: I think we are going to approach it like the first time we went out with AVAIL and the Casualties. We're gonna play first to two kids or a thousand kids who don't care. But the way we look at it is that it is an opportunity. It's a great opportunity. If there are five hundred kids there and a hundred like our band then that's a hundred more than the night before. It's a good way to get the name out if nothing else.

So in March, you'll be doing a string of shows with Against Me, that's really exciting. Against Me is one of my all time favorite bands.
Jeremy: Yeah, they are kind of a phenomenon, you know? Even for a band that is so young still, there is this kind of enigmatic quality to them. Everybody talks about them, and it is awesome to be part of that. To be part of something that I believe ten years down the road will be like, "Do you remember when Against Me broke? Do you remember when they were that big? And do you remember what they did for music?" Especially nowadays with the tremendous amount of fluff out there.
Joe: It's exciting to be honest, because we went down to play the Fest in Gainesville in October, and I can honestly say that that is the first time in 6 or 7 years of doing this that I actually felt part of a "scene," whatever that is. It was the first time that I actually felt surrounded by a group of bands and people who wanted to play and be involved in music the same way that I and we do.

So to conclude, you guys have the run coming up with Against Me in March, which is right around the time of the release of the record "Above the City." And then what the fuck happens from there?
Jeremy: We'll see what happens. We're going to do another US tour after that one.

Are you guys going to headline?
Jeremy: Actually, we are gonna go out and meet up with friends of ours, Glass and Ashes from Ventura and do the West coast with them. Which is really exciting because we've never done the west coast, so we are excited about that. And then there is talk of a Planes Mistaken for Stars tour.

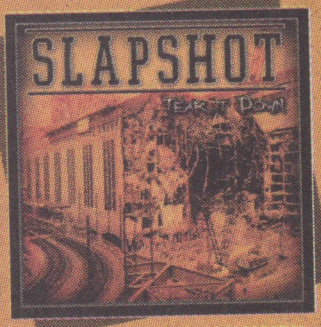
Sounds good.
Joe; There are a couple things that I'd like to add, with getting signed and all of that stuff, aside from everything that is going on with us now. The first time that we played with Hot Water Music we could have pretty much ended the next day. It has gone so far beyond what I could have ever thought our band would do that going past that point is all a bonus, and it has been. Everything has been fun. And as long as it stays fun, we'll keep doing it.


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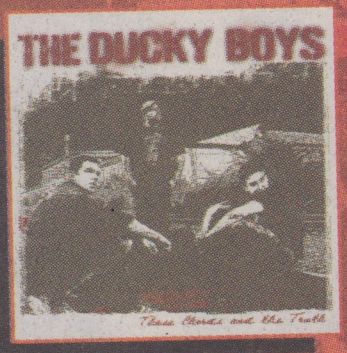
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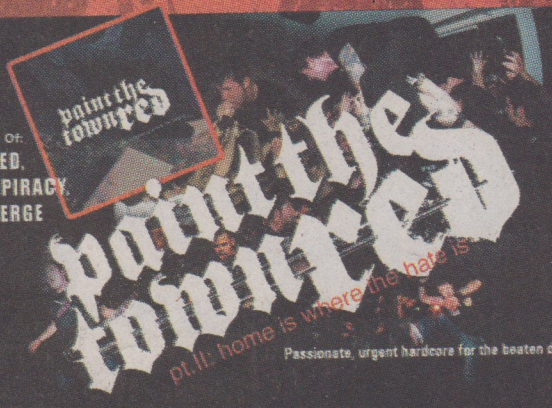


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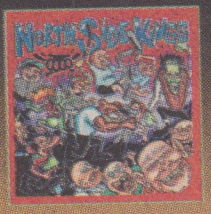
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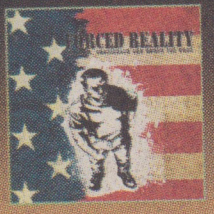
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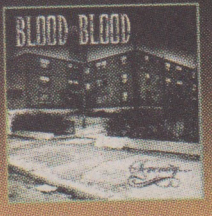
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UNWRITTEN LAW

HOLDING UP THEIR END

An Interview with Rob Brewer

By Don Sill

Unwritten Law are holding up their end...The Cali-based punkers have been rocking steady for over ten years and although they've received small blips of mainstream success they're happy to jam for anyone who'll dig it.

Night after hard days night Scott Russo, Steve Morris, Pat Kim, Tony Palermo and Rob Brewer hit the stage and bring the energy to the masses to rock their socks off with a simple hope that everything else will just fall into place..

Unwritten Law, whose 2002's *Elva* spawned the hit crossover single, "Seein' Red" that brought the band to new commercial heights and placed them on the mainstream pop-punk map selling upwards of 400,000 albums, are following up with their latest off Lava Records entitled *Here's to the Mourning*.

Produced by Sean Beavan and Josh Abraham *Here's to the Mourning* delivers an eclectic variety of punk-rock structures that'll attract new fans as well as old and is led by the single "Save Me," co-written with hit-mistress, Linda Perry (Gwen Stefani, Christina Aguilera).

AMP Spoke with guitarist Rob Brewer about the new album and how he never actually met Linda Perry despite the fact that they both worked extensively on the bands first single. Hmmm.



Hey man, are you chilling at home right now?
Yeah, you caught me in the middle of a bowl of cereal, man. [Laughs].

The calm before the tour, huh?
We've been touring...We already went to Australia for a couple of weeks and last week we went to New York and played CBGB's.

How'd that go?
It was okay. We basically gave away all the tickets to the label people and stuff because they're based out there and we never really got to play for them before. But it was cool. I've never been to CBGB's before and I heard a lot about it and now I can put that on the resume.

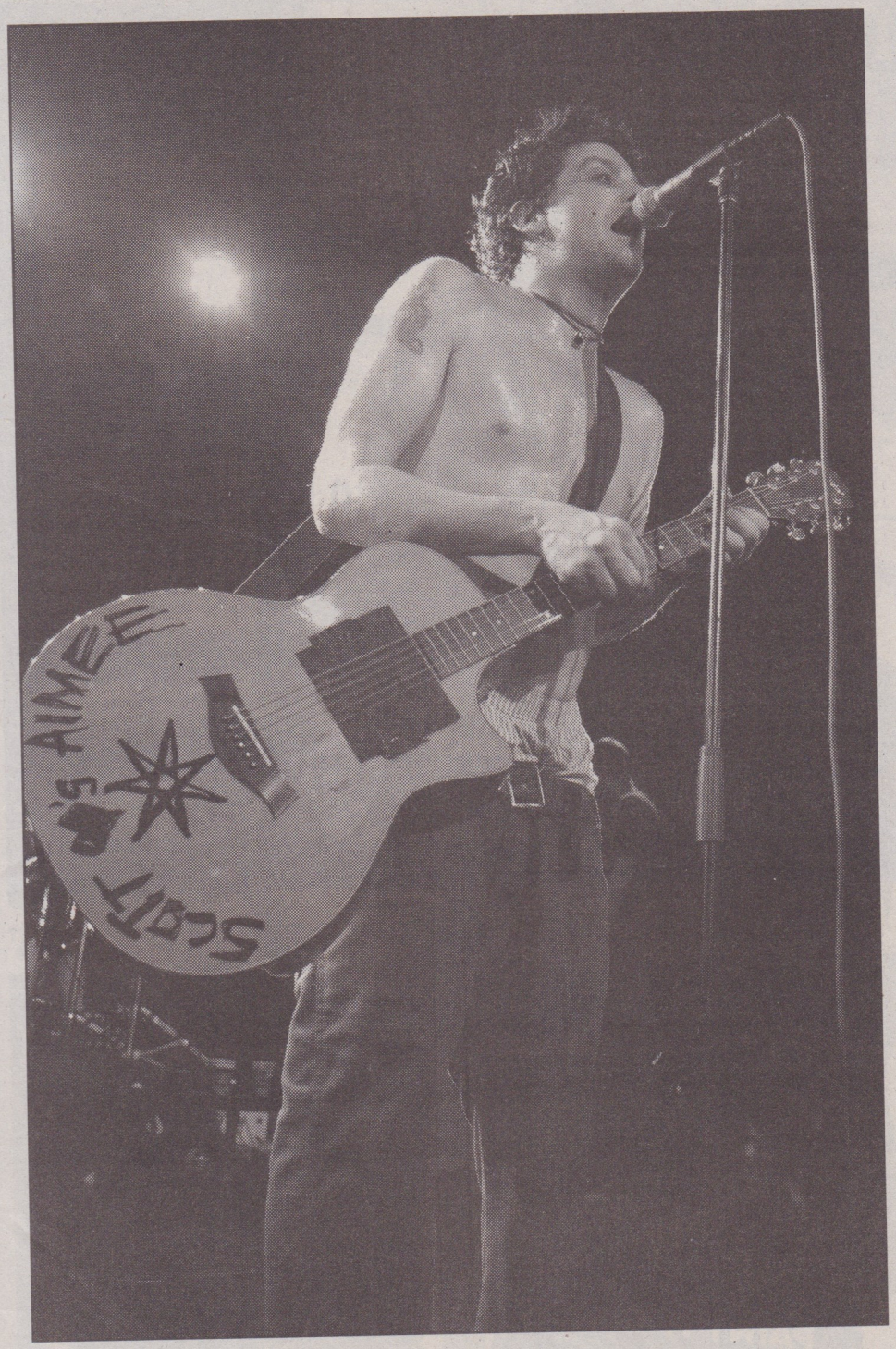
You guys got a lot of stuff brewing these days, new album and everything.
Yeah, it all kinda came together over the last half of the year and yeah, we're excited.

What are your goals for this album? What do you see happening?
I don't even worry about it anymore. I've had people tell me from four albums ago, "oh man, this is gonna be the big one." [Laughs] Everyone has an opinion on stuff and I just try not to look at it that way. I just try and go out and do the things that we have to do, you know, hold up our end of it, just go out there and do good shows every night and bring the energy every single night and hopefully everything else just comes together.

What would you say is the overall vibe of *Here's To The Mourning*?
Well, it's diverse, but it's less diverse maybe then some of our last records.

How so?
Well on our last records each song was different from the last one and on this one we tend to have more of a...I don't know how to say it...It's more rock driven, more cohesive as a whole, you know? We're pretty excited about it considering we always take two years between albums.

You guys always evolve from album to album. Is that a conscious decision or does it come natural?



"...If less people like the record then we're still happy to have anybody who wants to listen. As long as somebody is digging our music then that's good with us."

I think that like anything, the longer you do it the more you'll get better at it. For us it is really important to just make the sounds that we want to make, and do the things that we think are gonna sound cool for our music and in order to do those things you have to learn how to do it. It's all al learning process and we're getting better and better at it.

Linda Perry helped write the single, "Save Me," what was it like working with her?
Well, from what I heard it was pretty cool. I never met her [laughs]

Really? [Laughs]

It's funny because the way we did the song...that song changed about three or four times before we came up with this version. So I initially played on the original version but Linda wanted to make a change on the chorus...

But why weren't you there?
Oh man, my son was sick...I just had a baby three months ago, and I was going through a little thing with my son at the time and I didn't actually go up to LA for the re-working of the chorus.

So, who did it?
Our other guitar player, Steve [Morris] went up there and changed the chorus part and then they kept the other versus the same. So, I haven't actually met Linda yet, but her record speaks for itself as far as the stuff she's done.

Why'd you guys choose that track as the first single?
Well, we weren't sure if that was gonna be the first single, but everybody seemed to like that one. From the radio stations and the label people and everybody. Instead of arguing about which songs we liked if someone wants to play them we learned just to let them do it. [Laughs]

You guys have been doing this for ten years already.
Yeah, we've been on tour since '93.

You guys have earned a nice following and even had some mainstream success with the hit "Seein' Red." My question is, does mainstream success matter to you guys?
Well it's better because you have more kids out there to play for and it's always better to play in front of a lot of people then not, I mean there's a reward that you get for having success at that nature so yeah, we'd like to have that again. But if less people like the record then we're still happy to have anybody who wants to listen. As long as somebody is digging our music then that's good with us.

You must be stoked to get back out on the road and play.
That's what we like to do the most, you know? We love to play live and for me, I'm excited to get out there and play these shows. It's a little harder for me, as I get older, to live on the road, but it's a necessity.

Will you be taking your baby out on the road with you?
Maybe when he gets a little older. I'll take him out and have him see what his dad does. I've already taken my wife around the world with me.

So has being a father changed the way you think or see the world?
Not so much, it just makes me want to see less of the world and more of my house. [Laughs]

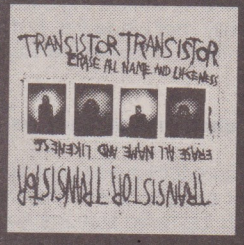
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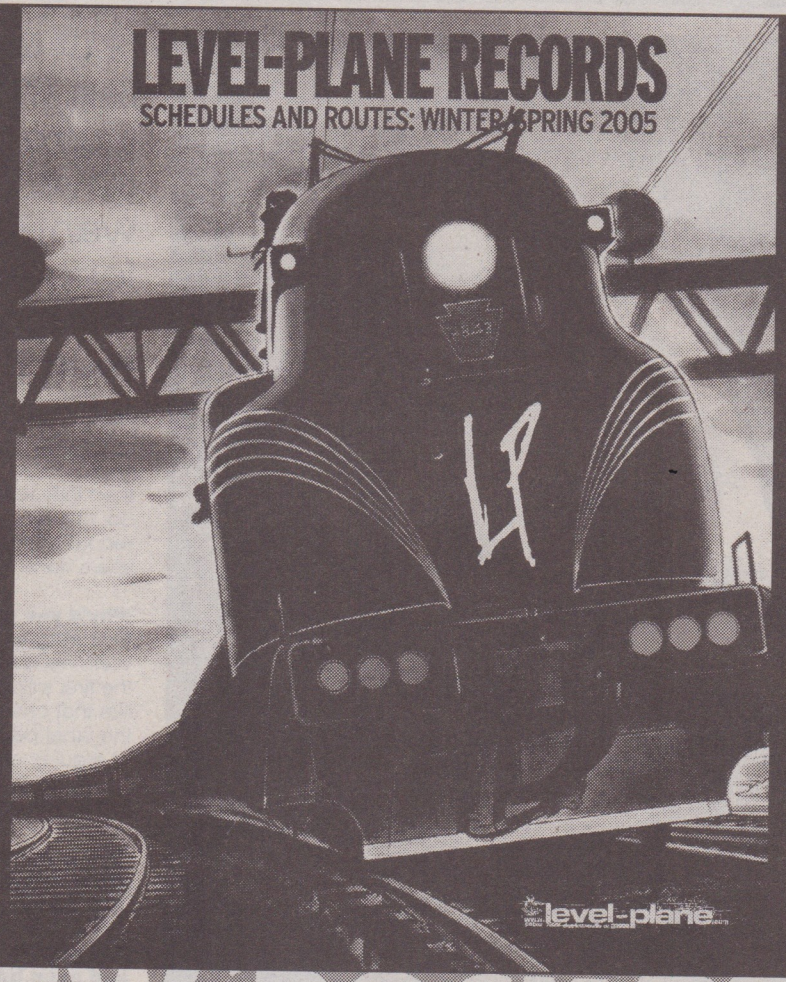
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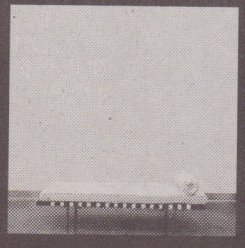


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THE REASON

By Janelle Jones

A band that can seemingly fit on any and all bills, The Reason – vocalist Adam White, guitarists James Nelan and Erik Mikalauskas, bassist Sean Palmer, and drummer Cam Bordignon – defy categorization. As exemplified on their debut album 'Ravenna' (Smallman), the five-piece integrate varying influences and styles including punk, hardcore, and emo with funky beats to form their own sound they ever so judiciously (and intriguingly) refer to as melodic venge-core. Calling from "Toronto, I guess" just prior to heading out on a mini-tour with Catch 22, Adam let AMP in on all-things Reason-related.

In the past, how far out have you guys gone out on tour?

We've toured Canada four times, like everywhere, and we went to the U.S. for the first time in September. We did four dates with Alexisonfire, Hopesfall, and Moneen, and then we did three weeks with Murphy's Law in November and the end of October.

Yeah, so Murphy's Law...

Those shows must've been kinda crazy, huh?!

Yeah, they were kinda weird. We don't really fit super-good with the band. We toured with them in Canada and we became friends and they were like, "Oh yeah, we'll bring you to the States." It was cool. It was super-good friends of ours and we hung out every night. It was super-fun and we just basically would play first every night – it was them and The Pietasters. It was just kinda weird... It's just two totally different things. Most of the people at the shows every night were older than us and sometimes they wouldn't even get there till super-late in the night, like right before Murphy's Law would go on and we'd play at 9:30, 10, so it was just kinda weird in a way. It's cool they took us on tour, it's an honor, and we became really tight with them, but it was totally a weird tour. [Laughs]

Well, that's the thing: they've gone out together with Pietasters before, and they're pretty different [stylistically], I guess you'd say.

Yeah, their fans, though, it's kinda like they're an older one of the ska bands and they're a lot about partying and drinking – same with Murphy's Law. So the attitudes of the fans were kinda the same. We totally had fun and we met a lot of cool people and ate a lot of good food and drank a lot. It was just cool. It was eye-opening, I guess.

Eye-opening?

We were just used to touring Canada all the time and we've

"...when you're on tour and driving pretty far everyday like five, six hours a day, not sleeping too well, and eating shitty food... your whole day revolves around those 30 minutes you're onstage pretty much. That's why you're there."

never really been to the States. We never really had a hard tour trying to get people to like us, so it was a big challenge every night, just playing in front of people who haven't heard of us or didn't really know our music that well – or our genre, even. It was challenging in that realm.

Right, well, there's a couple things you touched upon that I wanted to go over. Even just what you have coming up with Catch 22, that's cool you get on a lot of diverse bills, that's what it seems to me – that you can play with a lot of different types of bands.
Up here in Canada it's real cool. It just seems like what we've always done, like we went out with Pennywise in July and we did some stuff with Ten Foot Pole a year ago and it all seems to mesh together – people seem to be into everything. It's not really cliquey at all. It is, but it isn't. I guess I'd say our music and our live show can fit with pretty much anybody. I really, really wanna tour with Tegan and Sara... they're kinda like folky-pop-rock these two girls and they're lesbians – NOT with each other, they're twin sisters but they're both lesbians. They're from Canada and they tour with Ryan Adams and Hot Hot Heat and stuff like that. They're one of my favorite bands; I'd kill to tour with those girls. I think everything would just go well. We always just try and submit for anything that we like. I listened to Catch 22 before, so I [thought] it would be cool to tour with them. Especially when you're first starting out, when you're CD just came out, it's good to play whenever you can and it's better to be on a tour with a band people know than trying to go out on your own.

When you play these shows, are there specific circles you're better received in, you know, when you play with certain types of bands?
Yeah, the best part of the tour so far where we've been a support of another band was the Alexisonfire, Moneen, and Hopesfall dates we did in the U.S. We opened every night and there were pretty good crowds at the shows and they were really, really super-responsive to us and a good majority of them had never heard us before or knew who we were, but it just felt really comfortable. That was probably the best section of the tour.

Well that's always good when people come out for the opening – the LOWLY opening bands, too... [Laughs]
Yeah, it just seems like with this – I don't even know what to say about genres and all that, but that kind of music, anyway, Alexisonfire, Moneen, those kinds of bands, people would just line up hours before the show. With other bands, a lot of people come later, casually late. It's weird. Touring with a bunch of different bands, you learn when different kinds of crowds arrive, when the good time slots are, stuff like that.

I've read good things about your live show. What makes it so great?
The way I feel about it is when you're on tour and driving pretty far everyday like five, six hours a day, not sleeping too well, and eating shitty food, when you get to a venue and load in two hours before the show and you wait around throughout the show to play the set, your whole day revolves around those 30 minutes you're onstage pretty much. That's why you're there. That's why you're on tour to play for people to get your stuff heard, and the only time you can do it is during the time you're onstage. I guess it's just anxiety, like you just get anxious all throughout the day just to play that set, so when you finally get up there it's just give her shit 'cause that's the most important part of the day for us. We just make it the best part of the day.

You guys are kinda hard to categorize or label - 'cause people love to do that...! But I saw you guys call yourselves...
Venge-core?

Yes. [Laughs] Melodic venge-core. You must elaborate.
When we first started the band it was kind of a reincarnation of a couple other bands we used to be in which were more like punk bands, poppy-punk bands, emo bands, stuff like that, and when we started this band, started writing songs, we didn't know what we were really and we didn't know how to describe it. We saw all these bands out putting all these random words in front of core...

Yeah, right, like fashion-core... [Laughs]
Yeah, and I was just like, "Do they sing about clothes?!" and then I'd read the lyrics and be like, "They're not singing about clothes." And then I'd read like murder-core and kill-core, I'm like what's the difference? I didn't know anything. We were just like well all these bands are using all these things, and we'd just tease about it all the time. We were like, "Oh man, we gotta be one of those bands. We gotta make up a core." And then we were just thinking about super heroes and fighting and getting revenge and stuff, and kinda joking about it. I actually take it seriously now 'cause our lyrics are emotional but I don't dwell on stuff that makes me sad, it's not about dwelling on bad stuff that happens. I try and take it a step further and figure out what I'm gonna do to fix it, how I'm gonna be happy again, and how things are gonna get better or how I'm gonna make this person feel shitty for what they did, which is I guess a form of revenge. A lot of my songs have been written as a form of revenge or venting, getting it out, rather than complaining or dwelling on bad stuff, so I kinda took it seriously and we're just like, [in a tough voice] "Yeah, melodic venge-core," and nobody else uses it. I think it'd be funny if another band used it one day 'cause we can be like, "We started it. We started venge-core." It really started out as a joke just 'cause so many bands do that and we didn't get it for a while. Or post-modern hardcore or something. Like post-grindcore apocalyptic. It's just like, "Whoa! What's that?" No band wants to be called hardcore or emo anymore.

Yeah, that's so passé, right?!
Yeah, so they all make up their own things, and when you ask a band what style they are they say they're a cross between

"We just wanna give back to everything that independent music did for us... To be able to play and have kids sing along with your songs and come to the shows and be really stoked on your band, it just feels like you're giving back. You're doing for people what [bands we liked] did for us back when we were 15, 16, and I don't know. "

this and this, so we just jumped on the train, I guess.

That's cool. [Laughs] I had to ask.
It's just a little theme we do where it's like yeah, vengeance, it's cool.

[Laughs] You said you don't dwell on things in your lyrics, so how do you actually approach writing them?
It's more or less if there's something going on at the time I just kinda go on that. We don't really have super-deep topics. Most of our record is like we lost a drummer, got rid of a drummer, and got a new drummer in January and then three weeks later we were talking with Smallman, and then a month after that we were recording a CD and going on tour and all this stuff was happening and we all just got super-stoked about it, so a lot of the songs on 'Ravenna' just tell the story of being frustrated on tour, not knowing where anything's going. There's a song that's kind of like a metaphorical pirates-out-at-sea story about letting a member go. If you don't put in your time, if you don't help the team out, you're gonna get thrown overboard. That's the song "Red Sky at Dawn". We just go from all the stuff that happens. And there's songs like "Reclaiming the Throne", which are about, "Oh my god. All this good stuff is happening, we're so stoked, we feel so confident in what we're doing." It's just based on feelings. If we're frustrated, then that's what a song's about; if I'm excited, I'm gonna write a song about it. It's not all about sad stuff. I guess fifty to sixty percent of the songs on the CD are about being happy and confident and excited about stuff.

At least they come from a genuine place.
Oh yeah. I wouldn't call them unique or original or even good, but they're all exactly what I'm feeling at the time... Bands like The Weakerthans and Every Time I Die and Refused, I really like those bands' lyrics – kinda tongue-in-cheek but at the same time just straight-up and literal.

And you guys put out an EP last year. How would you say the two records compare?
The EP is more like songs that were written when we were sick and tired of our old bands, [songs] that we couldn't play with our old bands that we were like, "Ahh let's do this." We recorded the EP, started the new band, and put it out pretty much right away. A lot of the stuff was a continuation of our old bands' stuff, like more almost pop-punky with random screaming here and there. We didn't know what we were doing. We knew what we were doing, but just knew we didn't want to do what we were doing at the time. [Laughs] 'Ravenna' is more like we didn't put up any walls. We weren't like, "Oh we need to be one of these bands. We can't have that in there it sounds too much like a hip-hop song. We can't play this part. It sounds good, but it sounds really funky, really dancey, we can't do that. We gotta make the breakdown more heavy." We just wrote a bunch of cool beats, put 'em all together, and just didn't let any styles or genres hold us back. We pretty much wrote just based on our influences. Nobody in the band really listens to a lot of modern hardcore or emo. It's not that we don't want to. It's just I can't keep up and when people play the stuff for me it kinda all meshes together, all the band names sound the same. It's all metal-core with the same melodies and the same tempos and the same breakdowns. It doesn't do the same for me as The Police or Hot Water Music. When we're on tour we listen to a few new things but we mostly listen to all our favorite things, which tend to be classic stuff... When people write – any band – they just write based on their influences. Even subconsciously they just take from what they hear everyday, what they're putting on for themselves, and if all you listen to is the modern bands that are coming out like Funeral for a Friend or whoever the bands are with all those names, you're gonna sound like that because you're not letting yourself listen to anything else, and maybe that's what you genuinely like and that's good. But for me it doesn't do anything. I like a few of the bands; I like The Bled... We just take from what we listen to and what we've listened to all our lives... We play with emo-core bands all the time and I guess we are one 'cause we can't seem to shake it, but we don't really know much about it.

What would you like people to know about The Reason?
We're really nice dudes. Our whole thing is we're just genuine and honest dudes. Everyone in the band, we're all friends and we all love to meet people and talk to people. We're not about cliques. We're not about segregating ourselves or alienating anybody. If you fuckin' like ska, come check us out. Maybe you'll like it. That's how we got into the music. We just listened to a bunch of stuff and went to a lot of shows and that's what we're doing now. We just wanna give back to everything that independent music did for us... To be able to play and have kids sing along with your songs and come to the shows and be really stoked on your band, it just feels like you're giving back. You're doing for people what [bands we liked] did for us back when we were 15, 16, and I don't know. We're just fun dudes. Come hang out with us. [Laughs] Listen to our stuff. We're just a band hanging out, having a good time.

The Reason are planning on touring their asses off in 2005. Check out www.thereason.ca.



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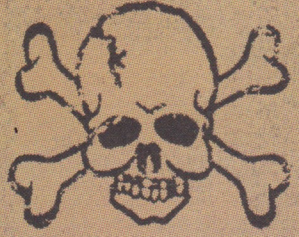
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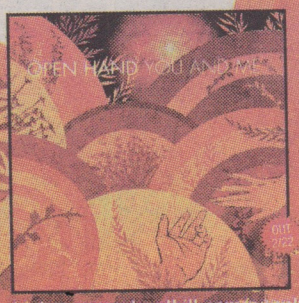
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THROWDOWN

KEEPING IT REAL



By Don Sill

While touring with Lamb Of God, Fear Factory and Children Of The Bodom many metal fans were introduced to a band called Throwdown. To them, Throwdown is a brand new band who in their minds is unseasoned and untested... well, they'd be very wrong.

Truth is that Throwdown has been one of Orange County's flagship bands since 1997. With seven years under their belts this hardcore outfit has shared members with Eighteen Visions, Death By Stereo and Bleeding Through and has faced their fair share of trials and tribulations and are currently breaking from the underground hardcore circuit and crossing genres in order to get their sound out to the masses and be heard by as many people as possible.

With their current line-up consisting of Dave Peters (vocals); Dom Macaluso (bass); Tommy Love (guitar); Matt Mentley (guitar) and Ben Dussault (drums) Throwdown has emerged from a tongue and cheek joke band into one of the most potent and vital bands in the worldwide hardcore landscape.

Their latest DVD- Throwdown: Together. Forever. United on Trustkill Records, is a 120+ minute feature encompassing Throwdown's entire history, starting from their very first show in OC in 1997 all the way to the present.

Alongside song videos and other extra footage, Throwdown: Together. Forever. United. is mainly an insightful band documentary, splicing together interviews, live footage, and the band's surprisingly humorous tour antics into a genuinely entertaining film about the hardcore scene. Don Sill spoke with vocalist, Dave Peters while on the road with Lamb Of God, Fear Factory and Children of the Bodom

YOU GUYS ARE ON TOUR WITH LAMB OF GOD, FEAR FACTORY AND CHILDREN OF THE BODOM- WHAT A DIVERSE SHOW THAT IS.

Yeah, it's pretty amazing. There's definitely a lot of diversity on this tour and we're somewhat of the oddball and we have a lot of people asking us what we're doing on such a metal tour. But, we're good friends with the Lamb Of God guys and got to

know The Children Of The Bodom dudes pretty well and we're having a good time. We've been well received on this tour and so we're stoked.

IT SEEMS LIKE THE FANS OF ALL THESE TYPES OF HEAVY MUSIC ARE BEGINNING TO MERGE INTO BIG FORCE.

Totally, man. We've been pleasantly surprised. I mean bands like Children Of The Bodom and Lamb Of God will draw the purist metal fans to the shows so some of the crowds get kind of rough but we do get a ton of kids who'd we'd never expect to listen to our music talking to us at the end of the shows. It's been great exposure for us.

YOU GUYS ARE NOT ROOKIES TO THE SCENE, YOU'VE BEEN AROUND FOR ALMOST SEVEN YEARS NOW. HAVE YOU GUYS REACHED YOUR GOALS AT THIS POINT?

We never did this band on a full-time level until this year, really. SoO, even though we've been around for seven years and we've all been friends for a long time we haven't really taken this band with full force.

WHY?

Well, we've always kind of took the approach of letting it take its own direction and see how far we could go with it. Whether it be staying in the hardcore game forever or branching out into the metal world or whatever. But, at this point I'm surprised because I never thought we'd make it as far as we have and things seem to just keep getting better for us. I guess we don't have a specific goal for the band; we just want to try and get our music out to as many people as we can and just reach new audiences.

HAS THE HARDCORE SCENE CHANGED MUCH WITHIN THE PAST SEVEN YEARS?

I think it's changed a ton. I think most of the changes were for the good. There may be a few older guys in the hardcore scene who'd argue against that, but I think hardcore is bigger then it ever has been before. You have much more people involved now then you did in the early '90s and I think the principles are there and more and more people are recognizing that it is good. Hardcore is more then just a style of music it actually has a message behind it.

I AGREE AND NOW THE MERGE OF METAL AND HARDCORE, METALCORE IS REALLY BLOWING UP AND TAPPING INTO THE MAINSTREAM.

Yeah man. Big time.

DO YOU THINK THAT THE MUSIC IS GAINING POPULARITY BECAUSE OF THE STATE OF THE WORLD WE'RE IN NOW?

I think that's possible. While not all hardcore music addresses politics or war and whatever I think that just the style alone is aggressive and brutal and cathartic and I think that a lot of the youth needs that. There's a need for it, a need for the release. It's hard to say if it's the state of the world that is fueling it or....

THEY ALWAYS SAY THAT MUSIC IS THE PULSE OF THE TIMES. I THINK HARDCORE IS AN OUTLET FOR THE ANGST AND FRUSTRATIONS OF THE KIDS TODAY.

Absolutely. Hardcore has been around before all this terrorism stuff, but I do think that this is the style of music that will help those kids, the ones who are confused and don't know what to do, it helps them find a voice.

DOES THE WAR AND ALL THIS SHIT GOING ON TODAY INFLUENCE YOU AS AN ARTIST?

You know, it's funny you say that. We've never really written about politics with this band. We've never addressed issues and stuff that's going on in the world. Mostly we write about friendship, unity and stuff like that, more personal. But I think it's impossible to avoid speaking about what's going on in the world right now. While there's not too much mention of that stuff on our last record I think you can expect to hear it on the next one. There are things that are going on in the world that effect everyone, especially the youth and it's almost an obligation for musicians to speak on it to some degree.

IT SEEMS LIKE SO MUCH GREAT MUSIC CAME OUT DURING THE VIETNAM ERA. THAT WAS ONE OF THE GOOD THINGS ABOUT THAT WAR WAS ALL THE GREAT MUSIC AND NOW WE'RE STARTING TO SEE THE SAME THING HAPPEN AGAIN. DO YOU THINK, IT SOUNDS CRAZY TO SAY, BUT DO YOU THINK THAT WAR IS GOOD FOR MUSIC?

In a way, yeah. I mean every time there's some sort of crisis in the world or anytime there's something that'll bring musicians together or bring different genres music talking about the same issue then I think it's healthy. Obviously it takes a catastrophic event to bring people together, unfortunately. You're right, a lot of great music came out of the Vietnam era and I think that was because a lot of young people and young musicians voiced concern for something that affected everybody and I think people are doing that again now. But yeah, in a way, it calls out all different genres of music to step up and say something. War creates a need for people to make their voice.

WHAT IS THE VOICE OF THROWDOWN?

Throwdown is in the middle. We write about what we love and what we hate. We write about what is real to us, that's what we've always done. We never tried to go out on a limb with lyrics and, for lack of a better phrase, we keep it real, you know. [laughs] we write about things that are important to us which is our friends, our family, the people that we love and we write about the obstacles that are in our way, our enemies, the problems that we've all faced, problems that anybody can relate to. At the end of the day we're just writing music that anybody who picks up out CD booklet and read the lyrics they can be influenced by it and apply it to their lives somehow. I think that's the purpose of music in general, at least for me, is that your able to get up there and do something for yourself and for the people who are listening also.

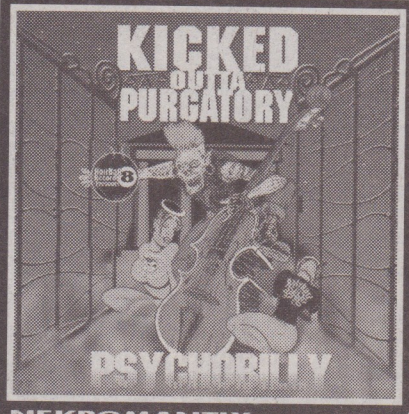
YOU GUYS DELIVER THE GOODS MAN. THIS DVD, THROWDOWN: TOGETHER. FOREVER. UNITED. REALLY PUTS IT ALL INTO PERSPECTIVE AND DEMONSTRATES WHAT YOU GUYS ARE ALL ABOUT.

Yeah, even though to many we are a new band there is a lot of history that has led us to this point. I think it's cool for people who have followed us to watch this DVD and for people who just heard of us to learned where we came from and even though we have a lot of serious things to say we don't take ourselves real seriously.

THE DVD ROCKS, MAN. IT'S A REALLY GOOD LOOK INTO THE BAND AND TO SHOE THAT THROUGH THE YEARS AND LIKE YOU SAID YOU GUYS DO KEEP IT REAL.

[Laughs] Totally. It's cool to just give that to people to see what we're all about.

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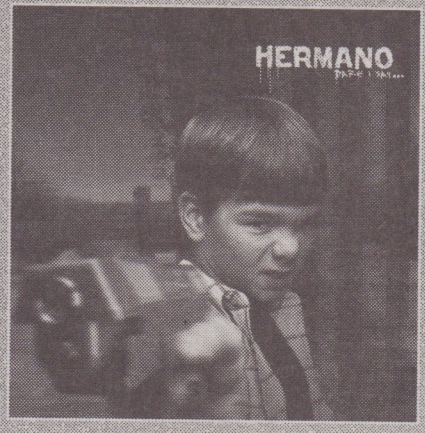


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FOUR LETTER WORD

AN INTERVIEW WITH VOCALIST WELLY

By Dale Nixon

Four Letter Word has been through 19 members since 1991 to get where it is today, which is surely an unprecedented amount for any band, ever. What is it that keeps you motivated to keep on keeping on? How does the current line-up fare to past incarnations of FOUR LETTER WORD?

Well, it's actually eighteen individuals that have been involved from beginning to present day. That includes people who have left and rejoined. It's pretty crazy when you think about it. I think it's the notion of unfinished business that's kept me soldiering on through some pretty dark times for the band. It's just never felt right, and I felt within myself that it wasn't time, and there was more to be done, like the picture wasn't finished yet y'know? I'm also a believer in working on one project. I think there's too many bands in the world as it is, without all these people doing three or four bands, as we have today, y'know; the same people doing an 80's style Hardcore band for their old school credibility side, the 'Emo' band for their sensitive side, their Garage band for their inner rocker side, and their real band, which is usually some Heavy Metal 'Hardcore' garbage. We need some quality control y'know, and we waste enough plastic as it is, so why not concentrate our efforts on doing what we really want, and not just jump on every whim that comes along on the trend cycle?

How does the line-up compare now?

Well I'm not exactly going to say it's the worst now am I? (Laughing) It's working just fine at the moment, fingers crossed. To return to the original question though; ultimately I think I never wanted it to end at a low point, and I was damned if external factors were going to determine the band's demise.

Being a long standing U.K. D.I.Y. punk rock band, how have you seen things change over here in the UK over the last 14 years? Has that been a good or bad thing for the band?

Fourteen years? There's a weak reception, but I think I can pick up a signal. Well, it was a LOT different when we started out, as in a different world, it seems. It really was "D.I.Y. Punk Rock" then, there was no machinery in place to get a gig, a tour or a record out, let alone get a 'record deal' or hire publicists or appear in glossy Rock mags and launch your band into mainstream success. You didn't even consider trying to get someone to release your music; it just didn't enter your mind. We gigged sporadically, and finally, after over four years, we had the chance to split finance our first 7" EP with Just Say No To Government Music from Blackpool, and it all went from there basically. If not, we would've definitely called it quits at that point. Have the changes been good for us? To be honest, I don't think any of the 'changes' here in the U.K. have benefited us in the slightest. Obviously changes internationally meant we got to work with B.Y.O. and tour the U.S. and

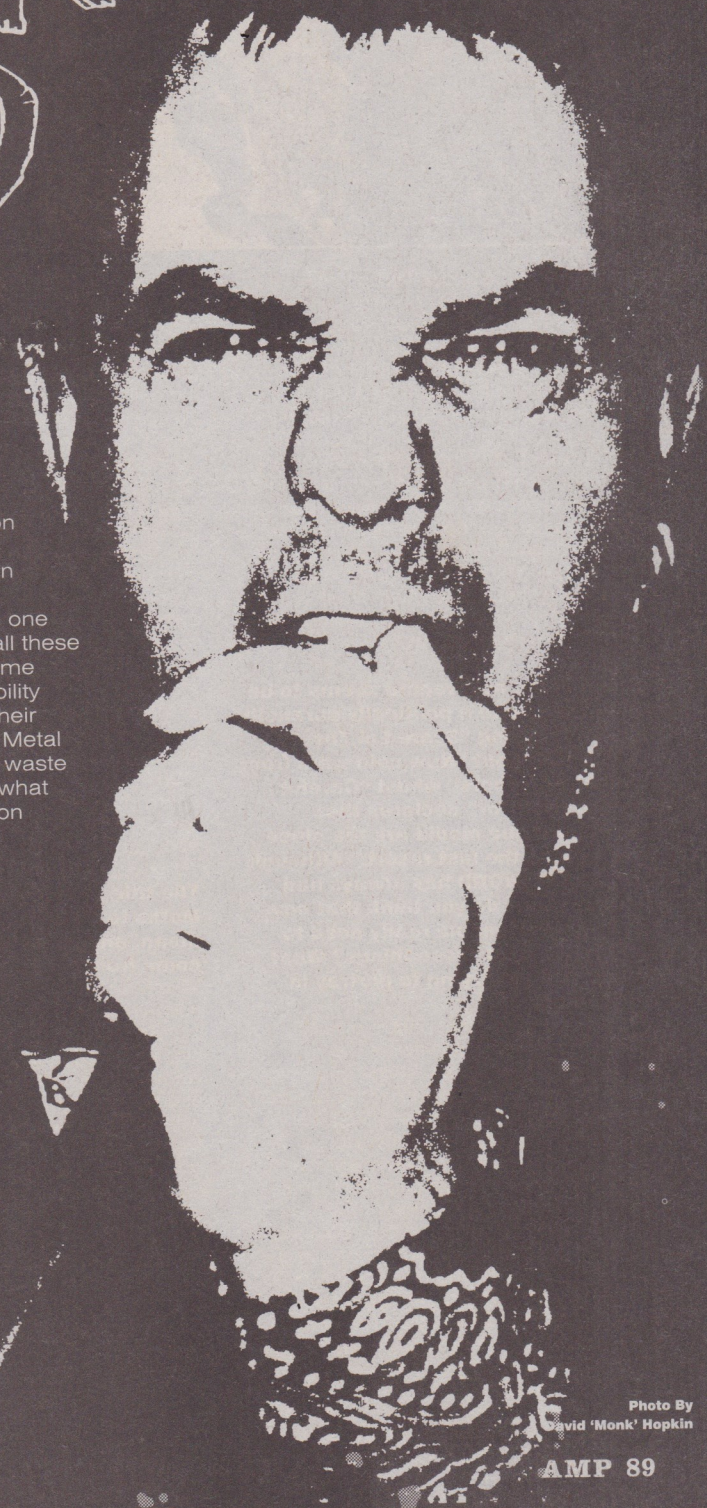


Photo By David 'Monk' Hopkin

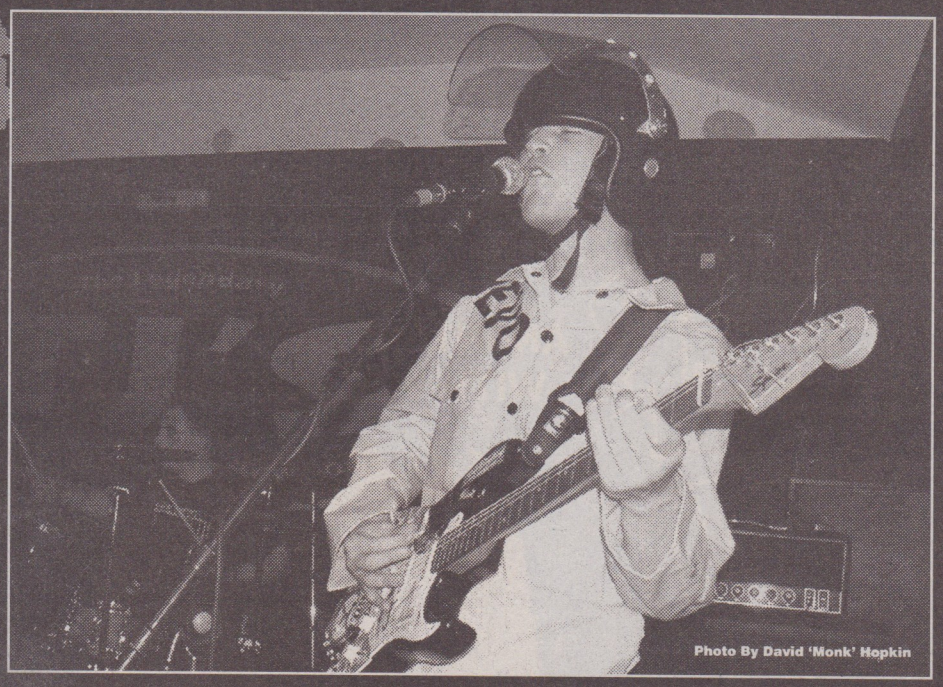


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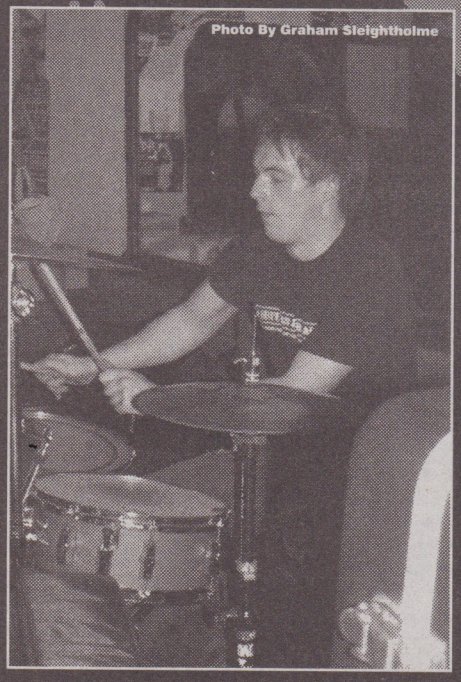


Photo By Graham Sleightholme

Canada, but I honestly don't think that would have happened if it hadn't been for overall confidence in the marketplace in the wake of the success of Pop Punk in the mid-late 90's. Obviously, being relatively long in the tooth, I'm not going to be too impressed with the way things have changed here in regards to how music is going. If you look at it positively though, it can be said that the way things are now with the corporate mainstream sniffing at every window of opportunity, at least it flushes out the frauds to a certain extent. But on the other hand, I have major issues with parts of the culture being stripped away at the same time. I wouldn't like to say where it will all end up, but lines need to be drawn definitely, we need definition not assimilation.

The tone of the new record seems to be coming from quite a politically paranoid angle, ie. the song "Scared of The Dark?" talks about "New cold wars from behind closed doors" whilst "Careful What You Wish For" declares that "Government and media are the place where truth is the last resort." Although FOUR LETTER WORD has always had a political edge, do you think that now more than ever people really need to start caring about these things? What message are you trying to portray in these songs?

It goes without saying that people owe it to themselves to be politically aware, always, not just right now. As far as I'm the lyric writer, Four Letter Word has been an overtly political band from the outset. I don't see the point in writing songs if you have nothing to say. A million songs have been written about love and feelings, I don't feel any need to add to that. Punk Rock doesn't HAVE to be 'political' as such, but I always thought it should be about challenging ideas and moving forward, and at least questioning things. Punk Rock for me is about the spread of ideas, not telling people what to think or how to live, but to plant seeds. The same seeds were planted in my head as a youngster, to question, and develop your own way of looking at, and approaching the world. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I wouldn't say the lyrics were necessarily paranoid, at least no more or less so than any of our older material. And if they are, that is only a reflection of how we are encouraged to think and perceive the world on a daily basis. We're not talking about anything new here, the tools of control remain the same. Keep people scared and paranoid and they won't question the status quo, and if they do, label them outsiders on the same level as an enemy. 'Scared of the Dark?' is about just this. It's merely drawing comparisons between the past and present, the communist threat and the terrorist threat, 'democratic' coups past and present. It's talking to the listener with the same patronising news-tone as if to a child, with the same invocation of paranoia as news-speak. 'Scared of the Dark?' is the age old question posed to citizens by the church and state. It is the ultimate crowd control and part of the definition of nationhood. 'Careful What You Wish For' draws comparisons between perpetual war climate and George Orwell's '1984', one of the most important books/ warnings ever written about totalitarianism. It links directly to it's predecessor which I talked about above. It's about propaganda.

The title of the new record is "Like Moths to a Flame"... what does that mean, and where did the cover imagery come from?

'Like Moths to a Flame' refers to mankind's uncontrollable attraction to warfare and incapability of perceiving it's own actions, ultimately bringing about it's own demise. That we are all complicit in ongoing misdeeds and atrocities, and that no-one is innocent; that whereas individuals are generally innocuous, organized groups of people are capable of crimes beyond the imagination, and yet no individual sees itself as responsible in the chain of command or hierarchy. That mass propaganda and consumerism in tandem with the terror ideology and notions of patriotism and zenophobia are allowing totalitarianism to grow under the guise of democracy; that our greed and plunder go unchecked, and we head to ecological self-destruction; that each generation is seemingly condemned to repeat the mistakes of history; that none of this is new, and that warnings continue to go unheeded. The front cover imagery of a squadron of moths, led by the Death's Head Hawk Moth, flying a raid over a bombed aerial landscape photo of the accidental bombing / inadvertent discovery of Auschwitz during World War Two, in conjunction with the rear image of burning moths falling from the sky, I think accurately conveys the title and concurrent themes, which are all depicted in the song lyrics and graphics throughout the album.

As someone said; "the events of 9/11 caused a light to turn on the room," and many long-time fence sitters quickly made it clear where they were coming from, from your average Daily Telegraph reader who started talking about "killing all those cloth-heads" to your middle class liberal who was pushed further left, so as to counteract these right wing opinions. From a purely "punk scene" perspective, do you feel as though the same thing happened within that microcosm? With bands and labels pledging their allegiance to the flag, and spouting pro-war rhetoric? Do you think there's a difference between a "Punk" band being heavily pro-flag / pro-war / pro-Bush and outright fascist skinhead bands?

Oh, it definitely did. Right back in 1998 when we wrote 'All American War', we did so with this express intention in mind, although obviously on a very minor scale. But it did work to a certain extent. We got some people writing reviews and the like who were really offended and this forced them to air their real opinions and reveal their true patriotic side. What they didn't realize was that it was partly a social experiment, and that the lyrical finger was pointing at our own government too. Of course it's easy to see Republican 'Punks', flag-waving Street 'Punk' bands and all out far-right Skinhead bands as largely bed-partners, if you view nationalism as the root of the problem. And if you view nationalism as the root of the problem, you also start to see how blaming an 'enemy' for the problems of the world instead of looking at your own possible failings, as the same as blaming 'immigrants' for your own oppression, or blaming the poor as being a tax burden. It's one and the same, and it goes

back to those tools of control I talked about earlier. You only have to look at the definition of the word 'conservative' to see that it is not about progression, and whether softened or hardened, right wing ideology is largely an extension of this term. As long as people view foreigners within as a threat to their community, foreigners without as a threat to their society, and the poor or the sick as something to look down upon via the route of concepts of criminality and class, then they will always be at the bidding of those who seek to elicit consent, for whatever war it is they require, national or international, in order to increase their wealth and consolidate power. These are age-old ideas with new logos. It's whether you recognize them is the important thing.

The 7" and album track 'Johnny Foreigner" covers an issue close to a lot of people's lives here in the UK, and that's the issue of immigration. How do you view the current situation over here, with illegal immigrants being put into what are basically prisons, etc. And how do you think circumstances could be changed for the better?

'Johnny Foreigner' was written in September 2001. It is referring to the issue of immigration, but through the eyes of nations on the brink of war, and is also in reference to globalized capitalism. The foundation of the message is not only speaking to both sides about what they're not going to achieve through the perpetuation of mass murder, but also to the individual citizen who has fallen for the media hysteria about economic migration. The point is, we in the West feel we can go anywhere in the world we please, take what we want, and then walk away when it suits us. And this has been going on for a long time. But when a person in one of these exploited and economically deprived countries, decides, after spending years seeing pro-Western and pro-Capitalist propaganda in the form of advertising, movies and global media in general, decides that they might want to see this golden promised land, and taste some of the fruits of their toil; you're stopping them at the gate and telling them they are not entitled? Or is global citizenship only open to business and the rich western nations? Like I talked about before, there are bigger issues being played out here, and it's too easy to fall for the same old divide and conquer techniques. After all, all the while you're blaming one group of people for some perceived disenfranchisement, another group is capitalizing on it. As far as I can see, these are just new targets for acceptable racism. It's the same compartmentalization of minorities in societies that ultimately leads to things like witch trials and final solutions. The bottom-line is, they are just poor people of another creed or culture, whether working to feed their families or sent out to fight in wars.

The song "Freedom Fries," probably the best title of any track on the new record, and not to mention featuring some incredible lyrics; "Freedom fries as the eagle flies, and liberty shakes." for example; possibly a song that could be taken as anti-American by your average upper middle class Republican voter? Or is it more complex than that?

Well of course it no doubt could be perceived as anti-American, if it suited the argument of anyone outside of the Punk Rock fish tank who cared about some song by some band somewhere. But it would be the same old

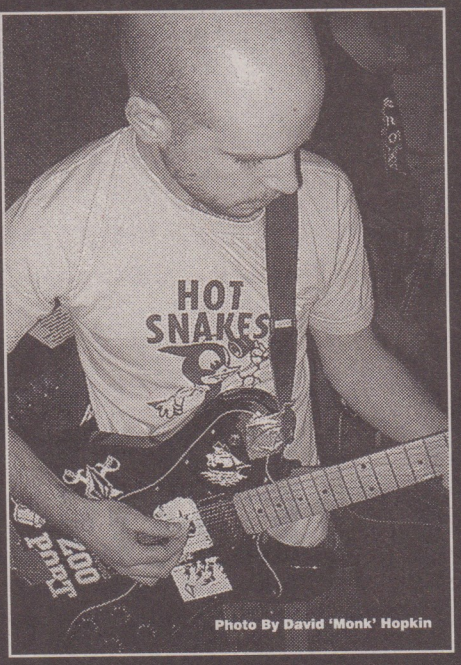


Photo By David 'Monk' Hopkin

automatic damnation, where if someone questions something, they are automatically in the wholesale 'anti' position. And it is exactly this kind of thinking that has got us in the position we are today geo-politically. It will always suit the ends of a dominant ideology to view dissenters automatically as the enemy, and it's precisely this thinking that stops any kind of progression away from the polarization and warfare mentality. Because I disagree with an action, it doesn't automatically render me opposed to a nation or it's citizens. You have to be careful when dealing with such things. I'm not anti- American, I'm not 'anti' any country or people. It's nationalism that's the problem, wherever it exists. You simply can't broach these kinds of subjects without taking into account that your own country is complicit in all the very same issues. 'Freedom Fries' is a wry look at, what is essentially, yet another example of the 'if you're not with us, you're against us' mentality we see again and again to gain consent for conquest and domination. It also looks at how landscapes can be leveled in order to be rebuilt in another image; physical, political and economic.

Now you've also been publishing your zine 'Artcore' for nearly twenty years, and your art and graphics have adorned many record sleeves and CD packaging over the years; how do you keep all this going in tandem with the band, job and your family?

I don't think it's anything I particularly have any choice about... ha ha! What being involved in this music has given me, on top of the enjoyment, opportunities and experiences, is a creative outlet I wouldn't have elsewhere. With the zine, writing and graphics, I have a voice and creative outlet that is completely on my own terms, where else do you get that freedom? I think you keep it all going because it is your vocation, it's your calling. What else would I do? I mean, some people go through life just absorbing, I can't do that. I can't still long enough, I rarely watch films, I read only when it is something I am really interested in. I can't help it, I just spend my time making stuff, I find it more rewarding. Everyone's different. That's how the D.I.Y. ethos of Punk Rock opened my eyes as a kid, because for the first time you realize that things don't have to be made for you, you can also create things yourself, and if you're really lucky, other people might appreciate it. As any zine should be, it's a reflection of what I'm interested in. It's all about graphics and the aesthetics of Punk Rock, not just the band interviews and scathing reviews, although there's more than enough of them... heh! There's a lot of focus on the history of the music too in the 'Vaultage' section, which is half the mag dedicated to biographical works on old bands and labels, especially of the Hardcore era stuff, but further back also. The graphics work is looking up at the moment, I have a fair backlog of stuff I'll be working on as soon as this new issue is out. I can't wait!

A rather frightening concept is coming into fruition over here, and that's boy bands adopting a "punk" sound and image. One sporting a MINOR THREAT t-shirt... personally I feel like it's just one more step further on from mainstream "Punk" acts... is this the end of punk rock as we know it?

It shows that nothing is sacred. Commerce will always come along and utilize anything it wants from any part of any culture, suck it dry, and then discard it, with no concern or conscience. Indigenous, ideological or sub; culture, is all just assimilated into this melting pot cycle of virtual 'culture' that goes round and round with no end, and less and less meaning, until the things it has stolen from also have diminished value. Is it the end of Punk Rock? Well, it could be said that it's demise has long since passed, depending on how you look at it. But for me, the actual core of it has proven largely untouchable. The mainstream has been trying to co-opt it since it began with things like 'New Wave' and it's various incarnations since, but where it has always ultimately failed is in that it can dress something up to appear to be the same, but it has never created a successful facsimile of it's spirit. Granted, this current attempt is the most successful yet, due to a gradual blurring over the last decade of the lines between mainstream and independent, to a point where there is now a generation bred to be more than willing to sign up, and of course, this gives the corporate the window into embedding itself within the culture, in order to steal from it's core; values, ideas, music or otherwise. That said, the key is to keep the ethics, the creativity and the urgency intact. Staying one step ahead, which is where Punk Rock's strength has always been, and which is why it's survived so long on it's own terms. Everything's a cycle, and I can already see another generation coming up, pure of mind and influence, who are going to the core of the original idea, untainted by perceptions of 'roots' as simply Garage Rock, 'creativity' as art, Hardcore as 'Metal', or 'urgency' as simply Thrash. Who haven't lost their way through living through 'progression' within the idea. I've always said, the key is to take inspiration from the point closest to the flame of inception. That is what we try to do with our music, whether we're successful at it is another matter, but that's what I see some of the new generation doing today, and it is this that gives me hope.

FOUR LETTER WORD is:
Welly - Vocals
Dave Millinship - Guitar
Dave Beer - Guitar
Chris D - Bass
Chris Murphy - Drums

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TSUNAMI BOMB

TAKING WHAT COMES

AN INTERVIEW WITH TSUNAMI BOMB'S AGENT M



By Don Sill

"I have two big pet-peeves with the music industry and their both tied," says Agent M, the sultry lead singer of the explosive punk rock outfit appropriately named Tsunami Bomb. "The first is that clubs takes a percentage of all the merch that we sell. I guess their argument is that we're renting a space from them to sell our stuff and if they didn't give us a space to sell our stuff then we wouldn't make any money at all. But at the same time, they're not giving us any percentage of their bar sales or anything like that. They have absolutely nothing to do with our merch. Sometimes they don't even give us a table; they just give us a corner and then charge us 20 percent of our sales. It's just really wrong.

"The second thing is those Ticket Master fees, I think that is so wrong. I mean we could have our ticket fee at $12.00 and then for a person to buy it through Ticket Master is ends up being like $30.00 which is just wrong. Especially since our market is teenaged kids. They shouldn't have to pay $30.00 to go to our show."

With Ticket Master living up to it's name and rock clubs banking in on band merchandise it is no wonder that more and more independent bands are struggling to stay alive.

"It's frustrating," Agent M continued, "I hope it changes somehow."

While the music industry isn't about to change it's greedy ways anytime soon Agent M and Tsunami Bomb will grin and bear it once again all in the good name of rock n' roll. With a new album, The Definitive Act and new tour with Motion City Soundtrack they have no choice but to endure the wrongs of the industry and look for the greater good.

'The pros of (the music business) is the traveling," says the singer. "I love to travel and see different places and meet different people. Also, you get to really know a lot of other bands and it's almost like we're all on this journey together."

The Bay Area band formed in 1999 by bassist Dominic David, who was joined by Agent M, guitarist Mike Griffen, and drummer Gabe Linderman. With their California punk influences sewed proudly to their sleeves, the members of Tsunami Bomb set about conquering America the old fashioned way — with incessant touring.

With the bands signature melodic punk rock anthems fused with razor sharp rhythms- and front woman, Agent M's, rare combination of sweetness, beauty, talent, and power Tsunami Bomb quickly made waves within punks underground and earned props in every city they played.

Now with their follow-up to the very successful debut, The Ultimate Escape, the quartet landed their first-ever debut on the Billboard Heatseekers chart (#44) and have hit rock radio with the darkly emotive single, 'Dawn On A Funeral Day.' "The Definitive Act is a better representation of what we really sound like live," says Agent M, "even though we did add some layers with guitars. We kept the tones and sound pretty raw."

Raw indeed, 'Dawn on a Funeral Day,' for example, is a metaphor for being buried alive emotionally and physically. "I think it's easier to write angrier songs," says the front woman, "I think those come out better. But I'd like to be able to write happy one well. I don't think there's anything better then a song that makes you feel really great about life."

Although not always happy, Agent M does tap into her emotions with a straight-forward appeal and like to doesn't complicate her music with cryptic lyrics. She writes from her heart and becomes one with her feelings for better or worse. "Any time I feel really happy or really sad or angry about things I try and write it down and make a song out of it later...My producer was talking to me about my lyrics and he said that I needed 'some more poetic parts in there, it's too straight-forward,' but that's just how I like it. I want people who are listening to know what I'm saying."

People do know what Agent M is saying and despite a few music business pet-peeves the singer/songwriter/front woman has always led her band towards success. "We've pretty much done everything that we wanted to," she said, "now all we can do is work on getting more fans. We don't really have any goals of MTV and media stuff like that, we just take what comes to us."

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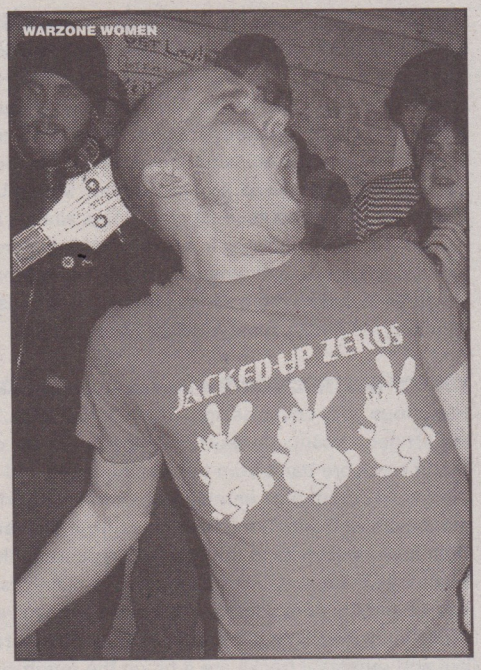
Back, fresh for '05. Yes, I'm quoting KRS-One from Boogie Down Productions. I like old-school hip-hop. If that's not cool, I don't give a fuck. Actually, kind of fresh. I'm sick of the winter and just got through shoveling snow off the driveway for the second time in a week. At least it was just a few inches and I need exercise after all that bad-for-me food I ate during the holiday season. Can't pass up those half-price after-Christmas sales on candy. No way!

Here's hoping that '05 is better than '04. 2004 largely sucked ass, both personally and on a larger scale. I don't suppose I need to detail the big picture yet again. They say things are going to get better. All I know is—THEY FUCKING BETTER! OK, there's a Black Flag quote to offset the BDP one. Happy now? Black Flag's "Damaged" still makes me happy, even with songs called "Depression," "Life Of Pain," etc... I just had that album on full-blast a few weeks ago and it moves me just as much as it did in 1981. Something just comes over me when I slap that record on the turntable. Muscles start twitching, jaw clenches and I'm ready to jump up and down and sing along with every word.

I'm not one of those old farts who thinks hardcore ceased to exist as a valid musical form after 1986. I'll leave that opinion to the guy who wrote the book "American Hardcore" a few years ago. There's still a lot of good and even great hardcore being made to this day. In the past two months, I saw a couple of house shows that were completely inspirational. They were at the same place, nicknamed the "Allston Library" but it's actually a basement space in that neighborhood of Boston. The first was in November and featured a couple of Texas bands who share members, World Burns To Death and Kegcharge. What a rage session, seeing two bands that powerful and in-your-face in a confined space like that. Look at Jack Control's face in the photo. That's intensity! I saw them play a few days before that in Philly and it was cool, especially since I also got to see Uncurbed from Sweden. But the basement show was more intimate and the impact greater.



Same space a month later and even more packed for three out of town bands, Fucked Up and Urban Blight from Toronto, the Warzone Womyn from Pittsburgh and a few local bands—Blank Stare, who are fairly new and play some fast, ripping hardcore, plus the Refuseniks, who blend energetic hardcore with hints of melody. Long-time local melodic punk politicos Disaster Strikes ended the show and I could only watch from the side because I was so drained from everything else. Fucked Up have IT. Mid-to-fast songs with bellicose vocals and a cool rock 'n roll twist. "Police" is one of my favorite songs of the past 2-3 years. Urban Blight weren't quite on that level but I liked their Negative Approach cover. Warzone Womyn are neither women nor do they sound like Warzone. Varying between ultra-fast hardcore and slow, dirge-like intensity and with an unhinged vocalist. I like seeing those types of bands better live than usually in the recorded form and their rawness was appealing.



It's shows like those that keep me functioning. I've had the blahs, lately, and the Fucked Up show, in particular, REALLY chased them away. Still, I suppose there's something to those old bands. They're so ingrained in my consciousness, such a part of my life and they were blazing new territory, each with different wrinkles not bogged down by strict guidelines—I've listened to Black Flag, Die Kreuzen, the Big Boys, Articles Of Faith, Circle Jerks and the Effigies in recent weeks, to name but a few. All could lay claim to being part of the so-called punk/hardcore movement from the early 80s, although many of those bands eschewed such categorization. The point is they made their own rules. The commonality was the brashness and energy. I suppose there's an air of predictability, regimentation today. But I still find exciting and worthwhile music.

CATCHING UP ON SOME REVIEWS

DEAD BOYS-Live At CBGB 1977 (MVD, DVD)

Believe it or not, I never did get to see the Dead Boys play live and now, for obvious reasons (Stiv Bators—RIP), I never will. Suppose this is a nice consolation prize. Make that an ass-whuppin' consolation because this really shows how kinetic a live band the Dead Boys were ca. 1977. No nazi-shock outfits in sight but there was still that devil-may-care, anything can happen feeling. Some occasional video dropouts but it's prime footage. Stiv throws himself around the stage like a maniac, blows snot into a piece of deli meat and then EATS THE FUCKING THING, ends up with bubble gum attached to his face and, oh yeah, sings up a storm. Cheetah Chrome sneers and slashes and Johnny Blitz hammers and bashes with savage glee. Songs from both albums ("Won't Look Back" is titled "Revenge" here), drawing from their Stooges and Thunders inspiration and taking it to a nastier level, plus a cover of "Search and Destroy." Pure punk, melding a rock 'n roll fierceness and tunefulness into an unhinged package. Rounded out by interviews from '77 and newly-filmed remembrances from Hilly Kristal and Cheetah. You don't get all the dirt but it's obvious the Dead Boys lived the life and you can see those experiences in Cheetah's well-worn face but he's survived to tell the tale. (PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456, www.musicvideodistributors.com)

AL QUINT

VARIOUS- All Tanked Up (Calendar Of Death/Six 17, CD)
20 bands from the Bay Area and, holy shit, just about everything here is worth hearing. Can't say that about most comps. Hardcore, punk and street punk—some names you've heard, some you haven't and many tracks are previously-released but each band sticks to a loud/energetic style. No emo or metal. As for those bands, included are Deathtoll, Fang, Scurvy Dogs, Born/Dead, Monster Squad, Strung Up and 2nd Class Citizens, who helped put it together. I was already a fan of the bands mentioned above and look forward to hearing more from Troublemaker, Krisis, Cheapskate and others. The only improvement I might have made would be including more contact info for the bands. (PO Box 5351, Concord, CA 94524, www.2ndclasscitizens.com)

WAR OF DESTRUCTION-The Danish Collection (Grand Theft Audio, CD)
Humorous, silly cover design—a plate of Danish. Who's in charge of the art department, anyway? Fuck the cover, the disc is sick. A Danish (hah!) hardcore band from two decades ago and it's an anthology of their vinyl output plus unreleased studio, live and rehearsal tracks, along with well-annotated liner notes from the band's guitarist. Definitely similarities to the Finnish hardcore of the day—a strong Discharge influence, buzzsaw guitars, a mainly fast tempo and ranty vocals and it's pure scorch. The sound did evolve in terms of musical proficiency over time but remained true to its hardcore punk roots. The live and rehearsal tracks are a bit on the rough side but the studio material flat out kicks ass. Puts most modern-day hardcore to shame. (501 W. Glenoaks Blvd., PMB 313, Glendale, CA 91202, www.grandtheftaudiorecords.com)

REPOS/FOURTEEN OR FIGHT-Split (Gloom, 7")
REPOS (Fork Burn/Youth Attack, LP)
A raging split, here, from two Chicago bands, both of 'em playing straight ahead hardcore punk and each draws from the well of Poison Idea, though not exclusively, and they sound different from each other. The Repos have a looser, somewhat more unhinged sound—raw and full-speed ahead with sputtering guitar licks and barked-out vocals. Fourteen or Fight recently called it quits and that's a pity. Their previous 7" and demo were ripping and their tracks here show no let-up. A furious, aggressive sound and lyrics that touch on larger issues ("Godless America"), as well as punk rock ones, such as over-inflated record prices ("Aggressive Collector"), but Frank shouts out his continued passion for the music on "Revenge Of The Latchkey Kids." Poison Idea are an influence here, though not the whole deal, and there's nothing wrong with that, in my book. The Repos' LP was recorded in 2003 and came out not too long ago. The sound quality is superior and the songs have a little more focus. Short but sweet and it's about quality, isn't it? Who wants 45 minutes of musical masturbation when about 15 minutes of hardcore adrenalin will do the trick. And they cover Jerry's Kids' "Straightjacket" without fucking it up—bonus points. Limited to 1000 copies on vinyl so you better move on this quickly before it becomes one of those overpriced records that Fourteen or Fight rail about. (Gloom: PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212, www.gloomrecords.com/Youth Attack: distr. by Ebullition, www.ebullition.com)

TOXIC HOLOCAUST-Deathmaster/Metal Attack (Gloom, 7")
Voetsek have a song called "If I Can't Read Yr Name, I'm Not Going To Buy Yr Record." Toxic Holocaust's logo is very difficult to read but I'm willing to bypass that rule for music this ass-kicking. Toxic Holocaust is actually a one-man thrash metal wrecking crew from Maryland and the sound is a combination of early Slayer, Possessed and Bathory. Nasty vocals and tight, straight-ahead arranging. The two songs here bring a fierce DIY hardcore approach to metal crossover and with a ruthless, economical barrage. TH's full-length, "Evil Never Dies," is also worth hearing and a re-press is due on Armageddon, as well as a possible tour with Straight To Hell as Joel's backing band. (PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212, www.gloomrecords.com)

THE OATH (Dim Mak, CD)
To semi-quote a long-forgotten song by a somewhat forgotten band, Angel City, this album puts you aboard a well-wound whirlwind. Pillaging, piledriving hardcore punk with one song connected to another by sheets of feedback. Mark McCoy rants and caterwauls at the center and it makes you praise the lords of the literary for lyric sheets. And those words and titles are smart-assed, sarcastic and pointed—read between the lines and one detects disgust with the status quo in most of life's regions and that filters down to various musical scenes ("Get Out Of Your Scene"). A crazy, fever-pitched musical battering, a clamor of guitar, bass and drums pushing the extreme—more effect than hooks but *what* an effect. (PO Box 348, Hollywood, CA 90078, www.dimmak.com)

CRANKED UP-This Is A Weapon (Creep, CD)
Technically, this is the first full-length for Cranked Up... they had an 8 song CD and a split 7" and those got combined on an import CD. To further confuse matters, some of the newer tracks also show up here. But it's a new recording, a five-piece lineup and the best material they've done to date. A Philly band fronted by Pat, late of the underrated Violent Society and they play boisterous, tuneful punk with older UK influences from both the late 70s and early 80s periods. And while one might think 'street punk' a bit, there ain't no flag wavin' lyrics, here. Quite the contrary—they're plenty fed up with the state of the world and say so in forthright fashion on "Another Vietnam," "Make Me Sick" (about mindless patriotism) and "It's Not Right." Pat's voice gets gruffer with age and the songs sting with authority. (PMB 220, 252 East Market Street, West Chester, PA 19382, www.creeprecords.com)

FORWARD TO DEATH-Death Therapy (Perfect Victim, CD)
After an OK 7" EP, this Jersey band really come into their own on their debut full-length. The vocalist is Andy Scarpulla, who you may remember from his days playing in Tear It Up and he emits the words with anger-filled intensity. Straight-forward sentiments that boil down to 'fuck you and your expectations—we'll do it our way,' whether it's the music they play or the way they choose to lead their lives. An aggressive combination of speed and harder-rocking elements, even a DKs/Agent Orange-inspired instrumental "Shore Points." (PO Box 52804, Boston, MA 02205, www.perfectvictim.com)

LIFE CRISIS-Unpeaceful Protest (Get Revenge, 7" EP)
I have to thank Nate from Gloom Records for turning me on to this San Diego band and, not long after checking out some MP3s, this record appeared in my mailbox. Life is great, occasionally. I like my hardcore punk loud, fast and uncomplicated and Life Crisis have that sound cold. Remind me of underrated locals Out Cold, with their angry, straight-ahead sound. This three-piece use their music to express disgust with the current military activity, as well as eroding freedom in the so-called "Land Of The Free." One of the best 7"s I've heard in months. (4118 Florida St., San Diego, CA 92104, www.lifecrisis.net)

AL QUINT

AL'S FAVORITE RECORDS, CD'S AND DEMOS FOR 2004

LP/CD/10"
ÄÄRITILA-J Kaikki, Kuitenkin Päättyy Kuolemaan!
BEHIND ENEMY LINES-The Global Cannibal
BOXED IN-s/t
CUT THE SHIT-Marked For Life
DEAD STOP-Done With You
FUCKED UP-Epics In Minutes
KEGCHARGE-Sadistic War Glory
LOOK BACK AND LAUGH-s/t
NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS-s/t
DAS OATH-s/t
REFUSENIKS-s/t
REPOS-s/t
SAY GOODBYE-s/t
SCURVY DOGS-It's All Gonna End
THE SERMON-Volume
STRAIGHT TO HELL-We Will Bury You
STRUNG UP-Society Rot In Hell
SUNDAY MORNING EINSTEINS-Kängnäve

7"
DEATHTOLL-s/t
DIRECT CONTROL-s/t
LIFE CRISIS-Unpeaceful Protest
NON FIKTION NOIS-¡Contaminación Mundial EP
RAT BASTARDS-s/t
REGULATIONS-Destroy
SKITKIDS/EXHALE-Split
SLEEPER CELL-both 7"s

Demos:
KEEP LAUGHING
SEND MORE COPS
POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT
CTS-Campaign To Shred

Reissues:
DMZ-s/t
REALLY RED-Teaching You The Fear
URBAN WASTE-s/t
WAR OF DESTRUCTION-Danish Collection
THE WORST-The Worst of the Worst

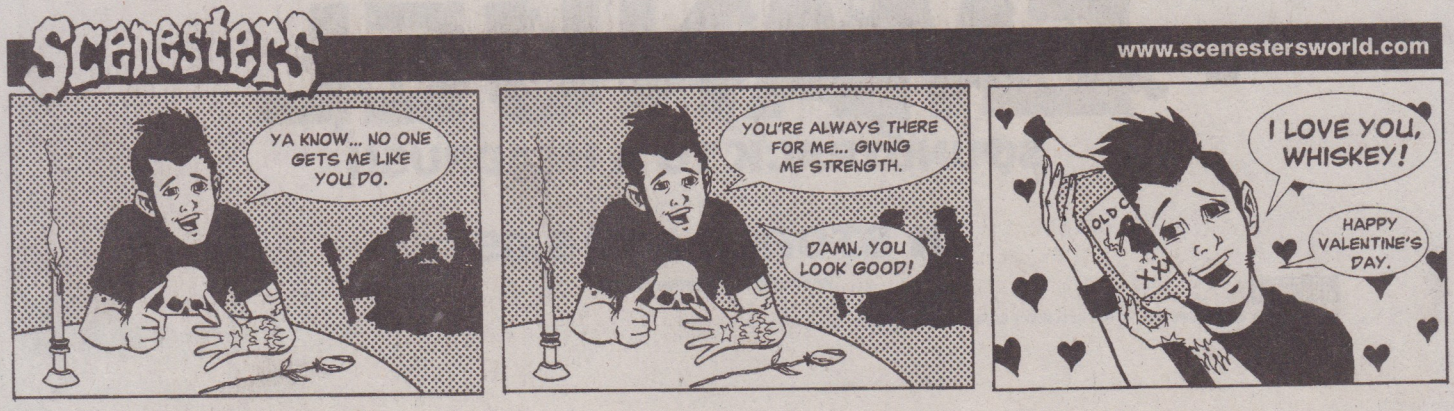
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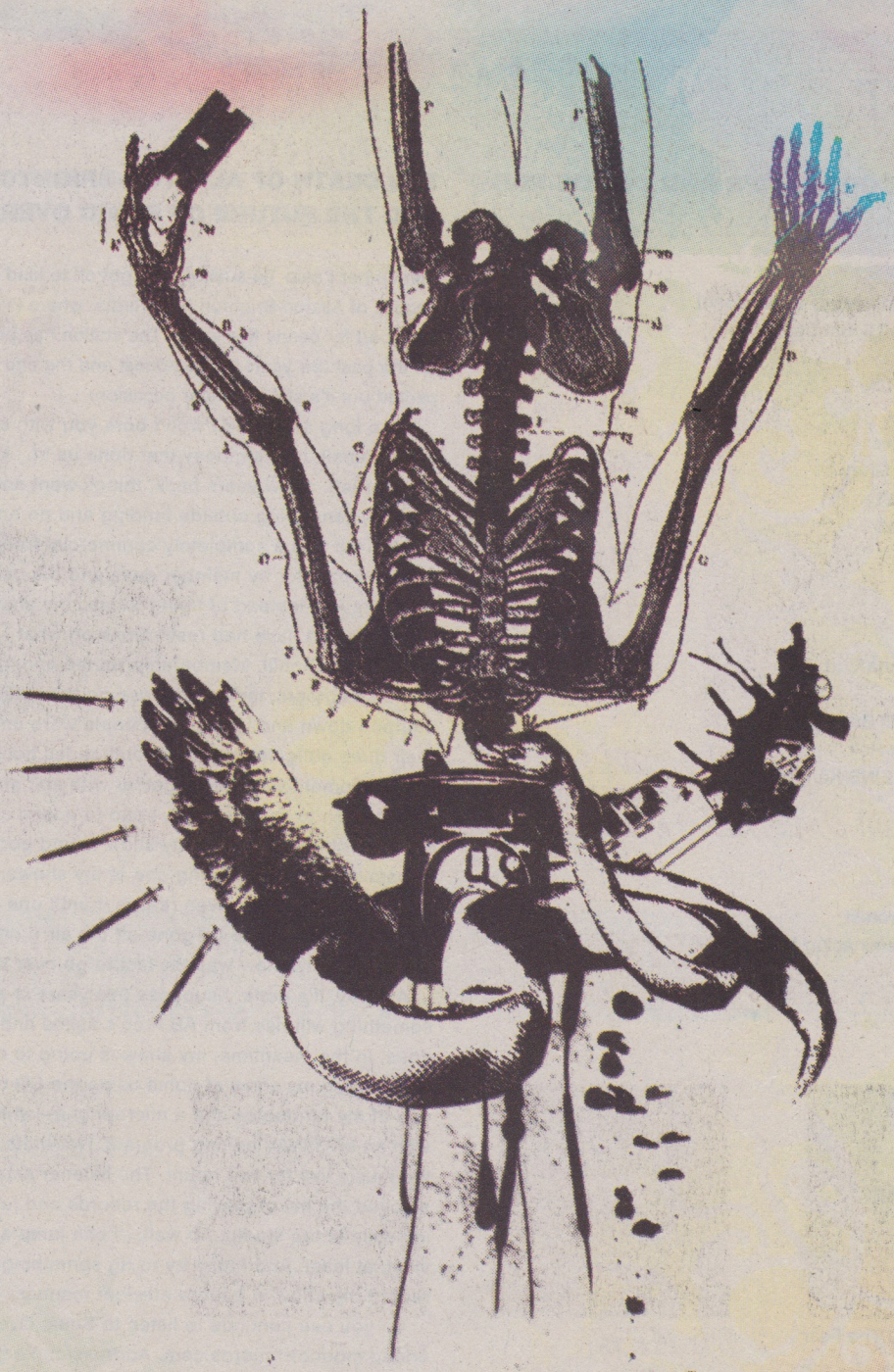
Remember I said '04 sucked? '05 got off to kind of a rough start with the demise of Allston-Brighton Free Radio, where I've hosted my show Sonic Overload for nearly five years. The station has been on a steady decline for the past few years, to be honest and the end wasn't completely unexpected but it's still a somber occasion.

It's a long story and I won't bore you with excruciating details but, in a nutshell, it was money that done us in. After the station's founder left, a few years back, things went south because he was good at generating outside funding and no one really picked up the slack. This was a completely commercial-free/volunteer/DIY operation and was paid for by member dues and the occasional benefit. That's why I stayed, instead of trying to take my show to another station where I might have had restrictions on what I could play, especially with this FCC chill. Membership waned and, recently, some long-time station members, including those on the station's executive board, stepped down and left. Some people were unable to keep up with their dues obligations and the station fell behind on rent and bills. The equipment was held together with spit and string and was temperamental, to say the least. I had to spend a lot of time editing sound problems to make my show sound good for the webcast. The transmitter blew out during one of my shows. I'm still not sure how it happened and didn't even realize it until one of the other members came in to inform me I'd gone off the air (I only had the studio monitor on). So my show was the last to go over the air, in mid-December.

Anyway, it's done. I suppose five years is a good run. Perhaps something will rise from AB Free's ashes and I may get involved, if it does. In the meantime, my show is going to continue. I have the ability to record my show at home using the CD drive in my computer, one of my turntables and a microphone—which I then edit together with an MP3/WAV editing program. Not quite the same as spinning the music live for two hours. The listener can't tell the difference but I enjoyed the act of playing the records and jumping around like an imbecile in the studio. Ah well... I can jump around while ripping the vinyl, at least. And I may try to rig something together at home to record the show in a more efficient manner.

So you can continue to listen to Sonic Overload at http://sonicoverload.moocowrecords.com. Address/contact info remains the same: Al Quint, PO Box 2746, Lynn, MA 01903. E-mail: suburbanvoice@earthlink.net.





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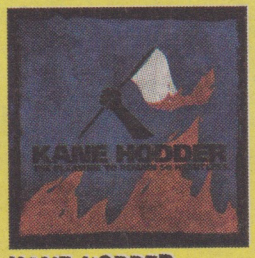
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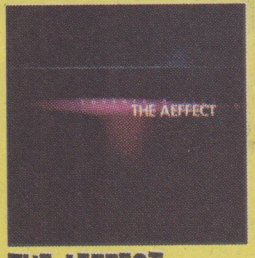


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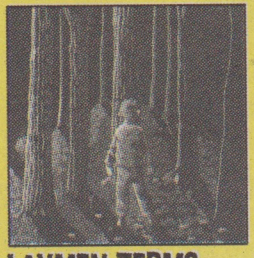
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THE ENABLERS
"To thine own ruin be true"



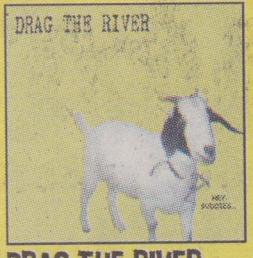
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DEEP EYNDE

By James Overturf

The Deep Eynde has been your main band for quite a while, when did the band start, and from what LA scene do you come from, and how did it evolve over the years?

We started the band after dropping out of high school. We were a collective of guys that were into the punk, gothic, and skate scene. Originally I was living in a garage in Hollywood, and eventually began to acquire equipment and began practicing there. Originally when we started out, we were fucking insane. We had no idea how to actually play our instruments; it was all about what some sort of performance we could do.

We were lighting the drums on fire, and one time we almost burned club down in Pomona during on of our shows, it was loud and obscene. I came up with ideas for shows using insects, It was total madness, but eventually we got our shit together and actually learned how to play our instruments. We ended up moving in with Naked Aggression, and 5 years later, we really learned about getting our shit together. I think our tenacity in keeping this band still together was from being around punk bands that would stay with us. We had so many bands stay at our house, it was non-stop every weekend, and it was hard not to be influenced by them. Even Penelope Spheeris, who did The Decline of the Western Civilization 1 & 2 filmed the third segment at our house which had to do with current punk bands. One time I there was this guy passed for a day on our front lawn, which turned out to be the singer of this band Toxic Narcotic. We were pumping out really dark music at the time, somewhere between Bauhaus and Christian Death. That caught the attention of a few labels in Germany, and we threw down some recording that was released out there. Although the band was pumping out dark music on the recordings, the live shows were more aggressive. We had to be, touring across the states made it that we had to play with every type of band, from hardcore, punk, emo, deathrock or whatever. Eventually we became a lot more aggressive and moved away from the performance art of it. Basically our wild stage performances eventually were phased out when we actually began to learn how to play our instruments, so there was less of a wanting to masquerade the fact that we were a bunch of idiots who didn't know how to play our shit right.

'Shadowland' is your latest effort, it seems the band is going in a different direction, less Goth, and more punk, is it an evolution, and how did it come about?

I don't think people have ever known where to put us. Because we've been less likely to conform any one sound, we've been tagged with so many labels. A big influence for me is The Damned, and I wouldn't consider them Goth by any means. Over the years we have played



skate parks and clubs with the same set with the only difference being what I was wearing. When I had zombie makeup on and spewing out blood on Halloween at CBGBS, we were considered goth...when I was performing with just a shorts and a hoodie at Ramp Rats Skate park, we were punk,... when the fuckin' funny thing is we have been doing the same set. For a while there we have been attracting a large gothic/ deathrock following, because of the stage show I used to put on. I find it so funny that people get upset that we actually became less of a performance art band. There's nothing more than I'd like to do than doing a fucking crazy theatrical stage performance, but we got to the point that we had an option to do it. One time we had this show at The El Rey where I had this crazy idea to bring 5 hundred crickets...they were to be crawling between two screens as we played behind it. I guess there was a hole in it because some girl told us that they all attacked her. Another time, we played this show at The Troubadour where I had this idea to wear a costume only made out of Octopus. I was in the process of wiring them on, when they said that we had to go on right away. I was half naked wearing these octopuses all over that were half falling off. Not two minutes after we started playing were there these Octopuses being thrown all over...it was this crazy fight with pieces being thrown into people's faces.

Do you see yourselves as punks? What about your collaboration with Daniel Deleon?

I would see it as more devil rock n roll, because it's gathering together a sound that is dark from all genres. "Punk" has become really washed out, not sure what that actually means anymore. But the best way to describe us is bastard sons of TSOL & The Damned.

In the past our audiences basically were the darker side of the underground. For a while there we have been attracting a large artist/gothic following, because of the stage show I used to put on. I find it so funny that people get upset that we can be aggressive, it's like we're are supposed to follow the rules or something. We were for a while starting to lean into Horror Rock, predictable 50's horror rockabilly sound, but it just got too monotonous because we fell into doing the same riffs that were standard in every 50's song. We have since begun to cut it loose and get more straightforward with the music. Daniel Deleon is an old friend of mine, an amazing guitarist. His guitar playing sound is on the traditional side, its clean and intricate. His first band was The Insaints, which were pretty infamous in SF in their day who used to play with Green Day and other bands from the Bay Area. He is a great guitarist, and has been a part of the backbone of the rockabilly scene in LA.

What's the meaning of the title? Is this a concept album?

'Shadowland' is what I see Los Angeles turning into. From far away it appears to be populated, but getting closer there is nothing but an illusion of people there. Clubs are closing down, artists are being pushed out of neighborhoods they created, and the illusion that the city is alive is only based on the shadows of the past. There are fewer and fewer places to play, and this town has become dead. One of my favorite movies is 28 days later and Resident Evil... both of which have that urban apocalyptic look to them that I relate to Los Angeles. I really have seen the deterioration of it over the years of growing up. I see this city becoming more and more desolate of feelings. So many fucking people move here to be cell phone actors or whatever, and they just all shit on the city...and it totally sucks. I have a lot of pride for Southern California; I'm one of the last Tongva Gabrielleno Indians, which is one of the original tribes based in Southern California. Of course no one has ever heard of us because most of our history has been buried alive by history... what else is new. Within that, I see Los Angeles like a town that has the appearance of life, but is completely desolate.

One can hear Billy Idol, or Dave Vanian influences in your singing style. Are they your main influences, and to what extent did they influence you?

I would have to say the biggest influence on my voice has been the result of screaming my head off over shitty club PA's. I developed this screamy high-pitched thing in my voice that I used to be heard. One time we played this club in Mississippi that was actually a doublewide mobile home. The whole thing was gutted, and made into a club...how white trash is that? I had to sing out of the DJ booth's microphone, it was totally weird. So the bands music is coming out of one side of the room, while my voice is directed toward another side of the room...it's just damn confusing. I have never really singled out a specific person to idolize...but if I had to, it would be Dave Vanian. He is definitely a big influence on me for the reason that he tackles different styles with his singing, and brought it all together with his melodies and his rich voice.

The album has a '80s retro feel to it. Is this a choice? Do you feel connected to the new wave revival of bands such as The Briefs and Stitches, for example?

In some ways our music does fit in within the genre of those bands...but there is a dark side to us, especially me. The band always had a dark streak in it, yes snotty rock n roll & punk, then I just feel like chaos. For the most part, the album captures many sides of us, with exception to that uncontrolled and less formatted sound. The Brief & The Stitches are fuckin' amazing.

Mike Rozon who's better known for his work with members of Beck and The Melvins, produced 'Shadowland,' how did it happen, and what was his input in the making of the record?

Mike is pretty well known within the Los Angeles circuit with his specialty of isolating sounds. He is more of a scientist than anything else. He takes it upon himself in jumping head first with every project I've seen him do. I see him more as a doctor than anything else. He fine tunes the temperature of the notes and makes sure that we aren't getting too far away from his ideas we started out with.

The Deep Eynde is better known overseas that in the U.S., you had a few releases in Germany, right?

We have had 2 previous releases in Germany, which we have toured as well. Our sound at that time as I said was dark. Germany has to be my favorite country in all of Europe. They have a thirst for all types of music, and I would have to say to all the bands that haven't been there, you'd be missing out if you didn't go.

You have the reputation of being unpredictable on stage, are you a 'son of Iggy Pop'?

I don't know if I can claim to be that. But it's very hard not to be inspired by him, he is so fuckin' great. One time we opened for The Damned, and I was thinking, "What the fuck am I going to do?" I'm only opening for one of the best bands ever, I could do all the song and dance I want, but people aren't going to care. The first band got booed off stage...and I was shitting brick. We went on and just went fuckin' nuts, and it all worked out, thank god. Being on the same stage as Dave is a fucking dream.

How did it come about that you signed on Duane Peters' label? Your sound is not the classic gutter punk Disaster has been releasing lately...

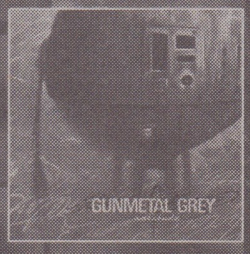
We got a call from Duane Peters at the beginning of the year when he heard a few of our tracks off a demo I sent him. He was totally stoked with the style of music we were playing, and put a song of ours on one the Old Skars and Upstarts 2004 compilation. Soon after that release he signed us, and it's been pretty crazy for us ever since. We have since been across the United States and most recently to Europe. Although the bands music was dark, Duane immediately noticed that it had a backbone that was definitely classic California punk. Within weeks, we had soon found ourselves being directed by Duane to release a record with his label, Disaster Records. Duane influenced the band to strip away the music, and expose once again our aggressive roots that had been since been given no attention. The result of '' is a post-punk sounding sing-along album totally inspired by the bands like The Damned, Bad Religion, Lords of the New Church, The Misfits, and Agent Orange. Since the release, we have been moving swiftly into venues with every kind of band in the live circuit in the states. Recent tours across the United States has pushed us everyone from TSOL to The Generators.

What's next for the Deep Eynde?

We are at the beginning stages of organizing our European tour for next year in support of our current album, Shadowland,' which will be released in Europe in February. We are also gathering some footage for a video release for some of the songs. We have recently played some extreme events for Fuel TV that will hopefully air in January. More information on our band and our releases can be seen on Disaster Records website...www.disasterecords.com. Our official site is www.deepeynde.com.

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ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES



Photo By Lisa Johnson

By Katy St. Clair

The Jews may run the entertainment industry, but for one brief night, in an LA rec center just north of Topanga Canyon, it was Me First and the Gimme Gimmes who were in control. Yes, Jonny was having his Bar Mitzvah, and America's second- best cover band after Dread Zepplin took the stage and proceeded to fiddle the roof off tha sucka.

"You should have seen the looks we got when we first got up on stage," says singer. and new Kabbalah convert Spike—who would like you to now call him "Ishmael"—sipping an ice cold Fiji water and alternately tugging at the red yarn bracelet tied around his wrist. "There were old ladies with their arms crossed... flustered distant cousins, it wasn't pretty."

Jonny's dad decided to throw his son a Bar Mitzvah that he might actually enjoy, opting to serve ice cream sundaes and ribs to the faithfully gathered instead of salmon and rugelach. The same unconventionality went for the music, and he decided to hire Me First as the "entertainment." People were horrified. But like all good San Francisco, punk-themed cover bands comprised of members of other successful bands, by the end of the night, everyone was up and dancing, even Bubbi. "It was Billy Joel that really broke the tension," Ismael insists. "But isn't it always?"

Ishmael is referring to "For The Longest Time," a song chosen by the Gimmes for its association with the Jews' lengthy exodus out of Egypt. Every song they played that night and recorded for their album, *Ruin Jonny's Bar Mitzvah*, was inspired by the Jewish people, from "Stairway to Heaven" (an homage to the Ten Commandments), REO Speedwagon's "Take it on the Run," a song about Lot and his wife fleeing Sodom; to Styx's "Come Sail Away," about the little baby Moses in a canoe amid the bullrushes. The only thing that seemed a bit out of place was apparent Eastern European drinking song, "Hava Nigella," which was no doubt seen as a slap in the face to some of the more religiously conservative audience members.

But that doesn't mean the night went off without a hitch. In fact, Ishmael can be heard on the recording saying that the evening could perhaps be the most awkward show of his career. "It was a Carpenter's song that worried me the most," says Ishmael upon later reflection. He is referring to the line that he sang in "Superstar" that reads: "What to say, to make you come again?"

"Little kids were running around, I felt weird," he says. He needn't have fretted, however. Any secular allusions to Jesus' return were duly ignored by any and all Semites.

The celebration did more that night than just usher a child into manhood; it also ushered a band into its own next stage. Aside from Spike, the rest of the band has also taken up the Kabbalah and adopted Old Testament names. Joey is now "Jehoshaphat," Dave is now "Abimelech," Jackson is "Nimrod" and Fat Mike wants to be referred to simply as "Sammy Davis, Jr."

"We are at peace with our God," says Ishmael, "and that, aside from all you can eat ribs, is just about all you can ask for."

RANTING, RAVING, & ROCKING BY SAL CANZONIERI

Sal Canzonieri from Electric Frankenstein here. I'm introducing my new regular column for AMP. As the column name says, I'll be ranting, raving, and rocking about lots of things, from the state of Rock & Roll, what's cool and what's not, why things suck (about music, politics, etc.), and about things that might be interesting for all to know. So, let's get the ball rolling with this short history of High Energy Rock & Roll, what I consider the last bastion of what's left of Real Rock & Roll. Lots of people just know about The Hives, and maybe Turbonegro (though both are great bands) and THINK that The White Stripes are rock (ha!), but the real stuff has been brewing for a while and I'd like to present many bands that new kids into modern Rock (not Emo, not pop, not The Knack-like crap psuedo-punk bands like Blink 182 and Good Charlotte spew) might not know about but should! Here goes:

"I wish the music business had one big neck, so I can choke it!" Yep, in today's world where music is 90% business and only 10% art, it is easy to get discouraged and just want to give up on it. But fear not, Real Rock & Roll lives again in today's High Energy music, where Punk meets Hard Rock by smashing together what was best about such greatly inspiring bands as The Dead Boys, NY Dolls, Ramones, The Misfits, Sex Pistols, and Damned with AC/DC, Kiss, Aerosmith, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Mott the Hoople, Alice Cooper, Ted Nugent, Blue Cheer, MC5, and The Stooges, add a pinch of Black Flag and another pinch of The Count Five, Music Machine, Blues Magoos, and a dash of Motorhead! Now that's REAL Rock & Roll! Well, get ready, I'm going to trace things to today like a lightning bolt is shaped:



Since the 1950s, great Rock & Roll bands have been coupling primitive emotional rawness with well crafted melodic arrangements, with the main ingredients being a strong driving back beat, big riffs and hooks, heavy pulsating rhythm, and loads of melody. Sure there was the soppy Doo-Wop slop, kinda of like wimpy rap, and even wimpier Pat Boone style poop, but the best, REAL Rock & Roll was forming a uniquely amped-up BIG & EXCITING over the top sound that went beyond the simple Rock (or false commercial rock) music of that day.

You can first trace the origins of today's High Energy Rock sound, with the emergence of such wild 1950s acts like Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, BB King, Larry Wiliams, Gene Vincent, Eddy Cochran, Link Wray, Chuck Berry, and such. (Yes, I know there was Jump Blues before Rock, and granted Jump Blues is the Granddaddy of High Energy Rock, but for now I am concentrating on post-Elvis Rock & Roll music).

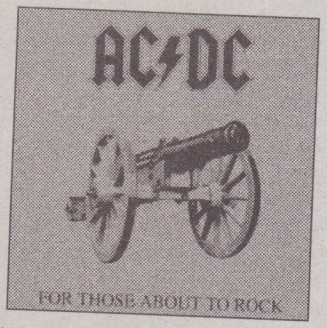


Soon after this time of Rockabilly and Jumpy Rock, there was the grand entrance of James Brown, Screaming Jay Hawkins, etc., who hands down added a huge dose of High Energy to all music, let alone Rock. The Girl Groups sound gave a brief hint of being energetic in songs, as certainly did a lot of Motown music, providing the foundation for the Detroit Rock that was to come much later. Surf music, especially by the Ventures, The Surfaris, The Trashmen, The Challengers and others started to up the ante on what Rock and Roll was going to sound like in the 1960s. Things were a bit perky during the Instrumental Bands days of the early 60s, with Duane Eddy, Davie Allan, and so on pumping out totally energetic guitar-driven songs. Really soon after the Northwest Rock scene exploded when bands like The Sonics, Wailers, The Raiders, and The Kingsmen added words to this guitar driven rock and essentially created the first taste of teenage garage punk rock. These bands sped up the tempo dramatically, added screaming over the top emotional vocals, wrote about being nuts or going nuts, and still sound great today!

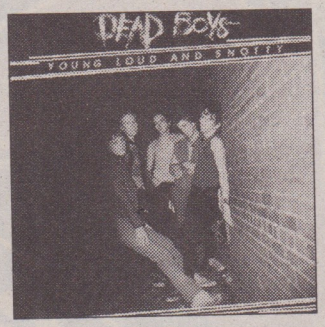


After laying the ground work for the mid-1960s Garage Band boom, bands like the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and so on sounded very tame compared to the explosive sound that TOP 40 (!) bands from 1966 from both the US and abroad like The Count Five, Music Machine, Blues Magoos, The Litter, Easybeats, Troggs, Kinks, Budgie (yes, BUDGIE! They first came around in Wales when the Beatles were popular and some clubs refused to book them cause they played too loud, too fast, and too heavy! For real.) Yardbirds, The Who, Creation, The Misunderstood, etc.., were all generating. Not only were these bands the next evolution of High Energy Rock but the very beginning of Heavy Metal to tell the truth. By the way, ONLY music from 1966 is really GARAGE PUNK ROCK, anything before or after 1966 is not quite it, if you have a discerning ear. AND, only about 250 such albums (not singles, mind you) actually were recorded. (Which strikes at another pet peeve of mine: there are TOO many bands today and NO ONE can keep up with all the many thousands of bands that exist today and most of them suck and shouldn't exist at all, but they do thanks to major labels with too much money on their hands. Things were way better when tons of people were into about 100 or so bands, than now when 100 people are into any one particular band, if that!)

Anyways: Next came the avalanche of Rock Music that was the1970s, where every kind of Rock and almost Rock came into being (jazz rock, blues rock, pop rock, progressive rock, etc.). This was the best of times and the worst of times. By 1975, Rock music kept coming and going in waves that lasted 2 or 3 years at the most, and do you know which bands are mostly the ONLY ones that people still remember? YEP, you guessed it! The ROOTS of the High Energy Rock bands, of which were: the Proto-Punk sounds of Detroit Rock (Brownsville Station, Amboy Dukes, MC5, SRC, The Stooges, etc.), Glam Rock (Slade, TRex, Sweet, Suzi Quatro, Silverhead), and Hard Rock (Blue Cheer, Cactus, Crow, Sir Lord Baltimore, Haystacks Balboa, Mountain, Alice Cooper, Blue Oyster Cult, Pink Fairies, Deep Purple, Mott the Hoople, Crushed Butler, Grand Funk, Aerosmith, Kiss, AC/DC, Led Zeppelin, ZZ Top, Cheap Trick, Black Oak Arkansas, etc.). Of course, the critics mostly hated these bands, and championed all the arty farty commercial bands, of which most are barely remembered at all. Good riddance.



RANTING, RAVING, & ROCKING BY SAL CANZONIERI



Now since the main stuff on the radio by 1976 was highly produced super professional grown-up people's Adult Rock (like James Taylor, Loggins and Messina, Kansas, Journey, and the rest of that boring stuff. Oh, and there was Disco too). The original late 70s Punk Rock came roaring in to crash the party, laying their farts around the cocaine soaked, disco dancing adults and continued on to the grab what was the last chance to keep the High Energy theme alive with such bands as NY Dolls, Dictators, The Ramones, Dead Boys, The Plasmatics, Pagans, DMZ, Runaways, Weirdos, Germs, F-Word/Rik L Rik (R.I.P.), The Saints, Radio Birdman, Hollywood Brats/The Boys, Sex Pistols, Damned, Buzzcocks, Rezillos, Count Bishops, Gorillas, etc. The shot heard around the world, indeed. Once the door was opened and the kids were "allowed" to Rock again, the door stayed open for a long time with tons of cool kids from everywhere, just like back in the1950s with Rockabilly, looking to start their own noise. If necessity is the Mother of invention, then here is solid paternity proof that BOREDOM is the Father! When Punk Rock hit the suburbs of America, in the Early 1980s, Hardcore Punk Rock (yes, that's what it was called) and bands like the Angry Samoans, Shock, Black Flag, Circle Jerks, Adolescents, TSOL, Bad Brains, The Teen Idles, SOA, Govt GI, Meat Men, The Misfits, and The Necros also maintained a High Energy element to their sound by making their music faster, louder, meaner, and crazier! At the same time, some influence creeped in from a few 1980s Punk-like Heavy Metal bands that raved loud and wild AND fast like Motorhead, Rose Tattoo, Raven, The Rods, Tank, (and Venom actually!). All these 70s bands provided the parentage to the earliest pure High Energy bands that later combined all these elements of loud, heavy, energetic, and emotionally exuberant music together into one big combination of Punk Rock and Hard Rock. They were the atom bomb, and what followed were their mutant progeny.

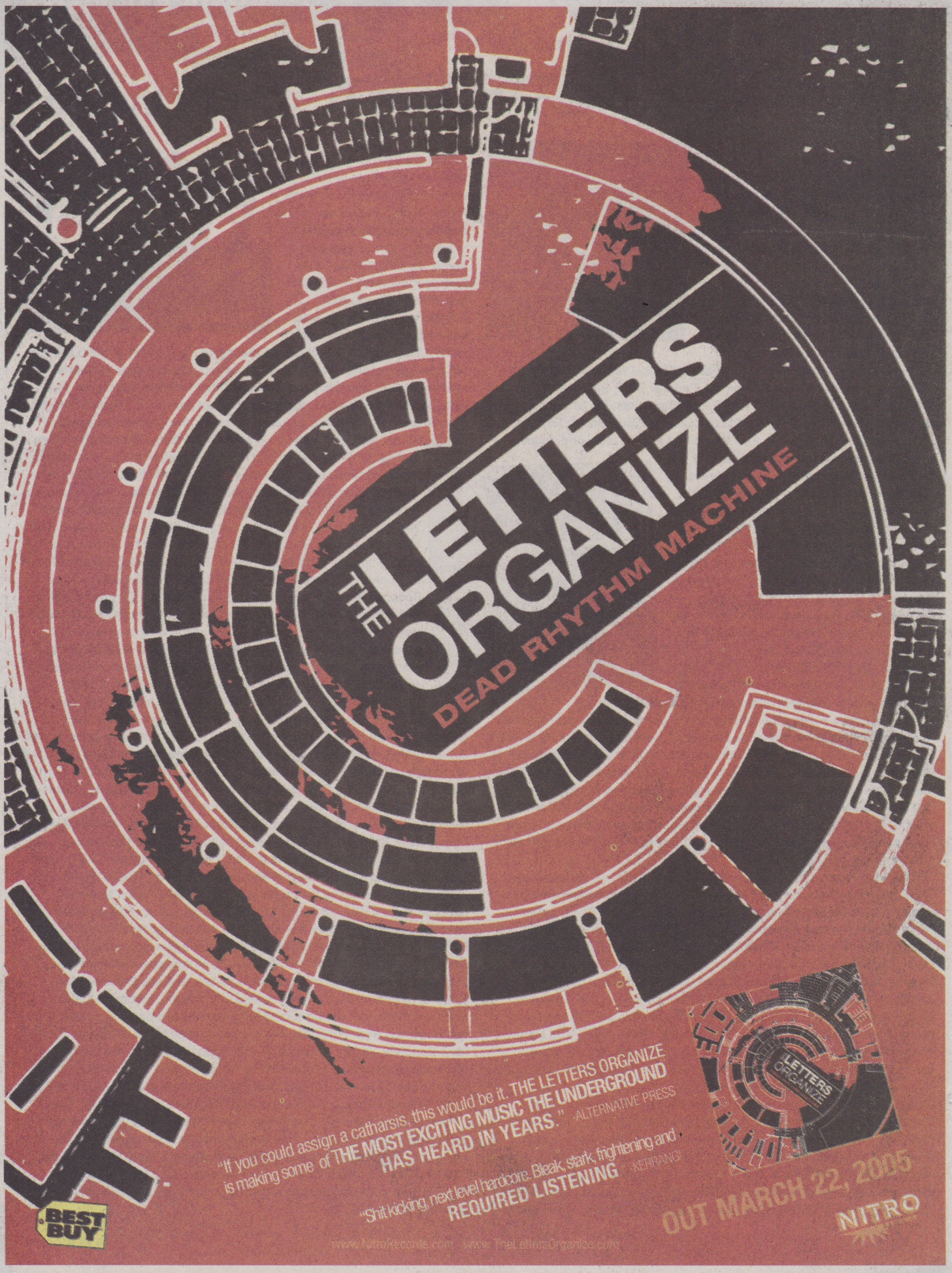


Thus, inspired by both heavy metal and punk/hardcore, the earliest TRUE founding fathers of High Energy Punk Rock & Roll came into being during the late1980s and early 90s with such bands like Redd Kross, White Cross, The Lazy Cowgirls, The Joneses, Painted Willie, Legal Weapon, Fearless Leader, Chemical People, The Nomads, The Dwarves, Otto's Chemical Lounge, Blue Hippos, Celebrity Skin, Flower Leopards, Creamers, Gargoyles, Trashcan School, Tommyknockers, Big Chief, Junkyard, Freaks, Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black, Action Swingers, Bullet Lavolta, The Fluid, Voodoo Gearshift, Knifedance, Swingin Teens, Poison Idea, The Didgits, U-Men, The Melvins, Green River, Mud Honey, Poison 13, Lee Harvery Oswald Band, The Wildhearts, etc. All great bands with nary a hit amongst them. By this time, Rock & Roll and "popular" music have gone their separate ways.

Somehow, during the early 90s, Green Day, The Offspring, Social Distortion, and others kicked a hole in the wall with a more, well, let's say "polished" Punk, and starting hitting not only the streets but the radio waves and the chain stores too. I don't consider them High Energy Rock bands at all, though. Like a slow volcano, the Northwest was again alive then, and just prior to then too, with Alice in Chains, Green River, Poison Idea, Coffin Break, The Melvins, Mudhoney, Nirvana (there! I said it!), and Sound Garden bringing back what was their idea of Rock meets Punk (not actually Punk meets Rock). And it was Popular, strangely enough.


GREEN DAY

Taking their cue from these bands, by the mid-90s High Energy Punk Rock & Roll finally evolved, was hatched, popped out of the belly, was belched, and became as we know it today. Something that has quietly, to the masses of radio friendly college-age morons, grew to feature packed clubs all over the world where real GIRLS actually go. Cool ones that look like the sexiest Joan Jetts and Chrissy Hyndes, that drink (but not get drunk, please!). Whole rows of leather and denim jacketed girls with black mascared eyes, singing along! No Britany Spears crapola here! Girls who start their own bands. Why did they chose Rock out of all of the tons of other kinds of music out there today? 'Cause Real Rock & Roll is sensual, exciting, moving, emotional, unpredictable... well... just like a real girl is! Without any "official" warning or permission from NME or Kerrang, like all the other NON-ROCK scenes need, this new High Energy Rock erupted all over the world when fed up people sought to revitalize Rock & Roll by infusing the attitude and energy of Punk Rock with the song arrangements of Hard Rock, creating the defining thing that High Energy Punk Rock & Roll actually is: Hard Rock played ineptly by real Punks. But that inept High Energy "Punk / Rock" sound is exactly what is so endearing about what's left of Real Rock & Roll of today. It's so wrong that it's great. Like an independently made, non-Hollywood Horror film! Nope, no major labels here in the world of High Energy Rock & Roll, no need for them, "they hate us, we hate them" (as Black Flag/Henry once said). Whole villages in Sweden (Malmo!) started bands! Whole carloads in the UK! Whole neighborhoods in the USA! Guitar Armies! By the turn of the century Rock Lives again, as worldwide bands like Teengenerate, The Makers, Rocket From the Crypt, New Bomb Turks, The Supersuckers, Zeke, Humpers, Lemons, Electric Frankenstein, The Gaza Strippers, Hellacopters, Backyard Babies, Gluecifer, Turbonegro, The Robots, Puffball, The Rockets, Nashville Pussy, Toilet Boys, The Dragons, American Heartbreak, The Donnas, Trash Brats, Iron Boss, Adam West, Black Halos, The Upper Crust, Texas Terri, Screaming Bloody Marys, The Candysnatchers, Thee STP, etc. all loaded up their vans, hit the clubs, put out SINGLES (vinyl singles!!), again, and did it. But, ONE BIG THING different is that most of these bands, however retro they were in sound, totally embraced the INTERNET of all modern things and built a huge underground network of websites, fan clubs, poster art, merchandising, mutual admiration societies, that allows the smallest bands in the smallest towns anywhere in the world to have fans from anywhere else in the world, getting the latest news out there, and selling records and t-shirts and posters, so that a band, lets say from Whippany NJ, can get to play in the middle of France, Italy, Germany, Japan, Australia, to hundreds of hot girls and cool guys that know the words to all their songs, to thousands of such kids at festivals in Spain, Sweden, Finland, and get to be the Top 2 out of Top 500 most featured bands in the Indie press. Hell, there are even Rock bands in Iran, thanks to the Internet! (Don't believe me? look it up). Today, in early 2005, there are loads of great High Energy Rock bands like The Hives, D4, Datsuns, The Super Bees, Camarosmith, Dirty Rig, Ironhead, Bad Dog Boogie, and hundreds more as featured on the "A Fistful of Rock & Roll" compilations (compiled by yours truly) and at amazon.com! Go out and dig it all up!!!


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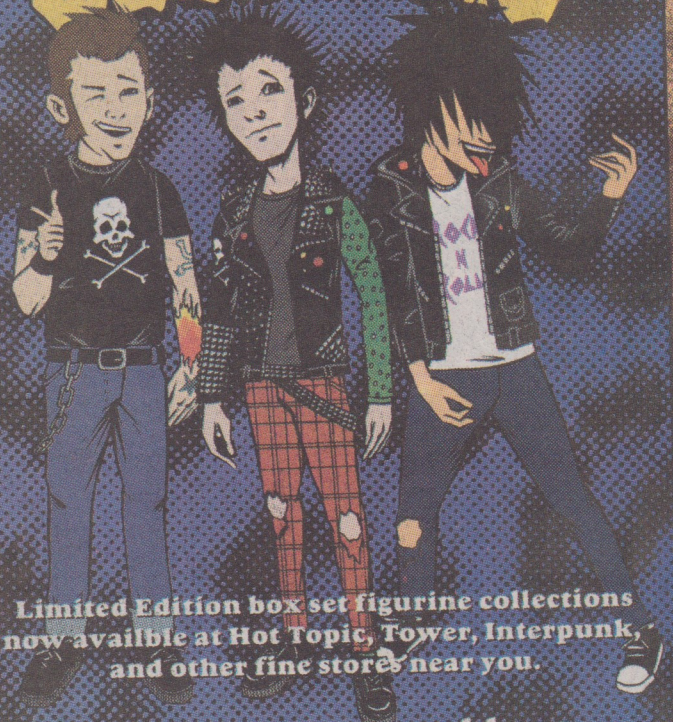
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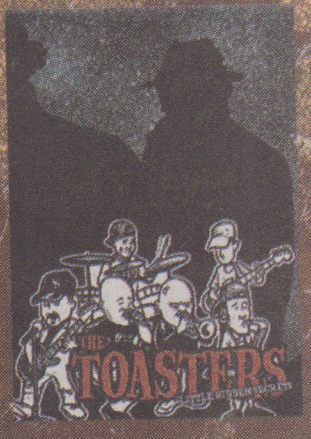
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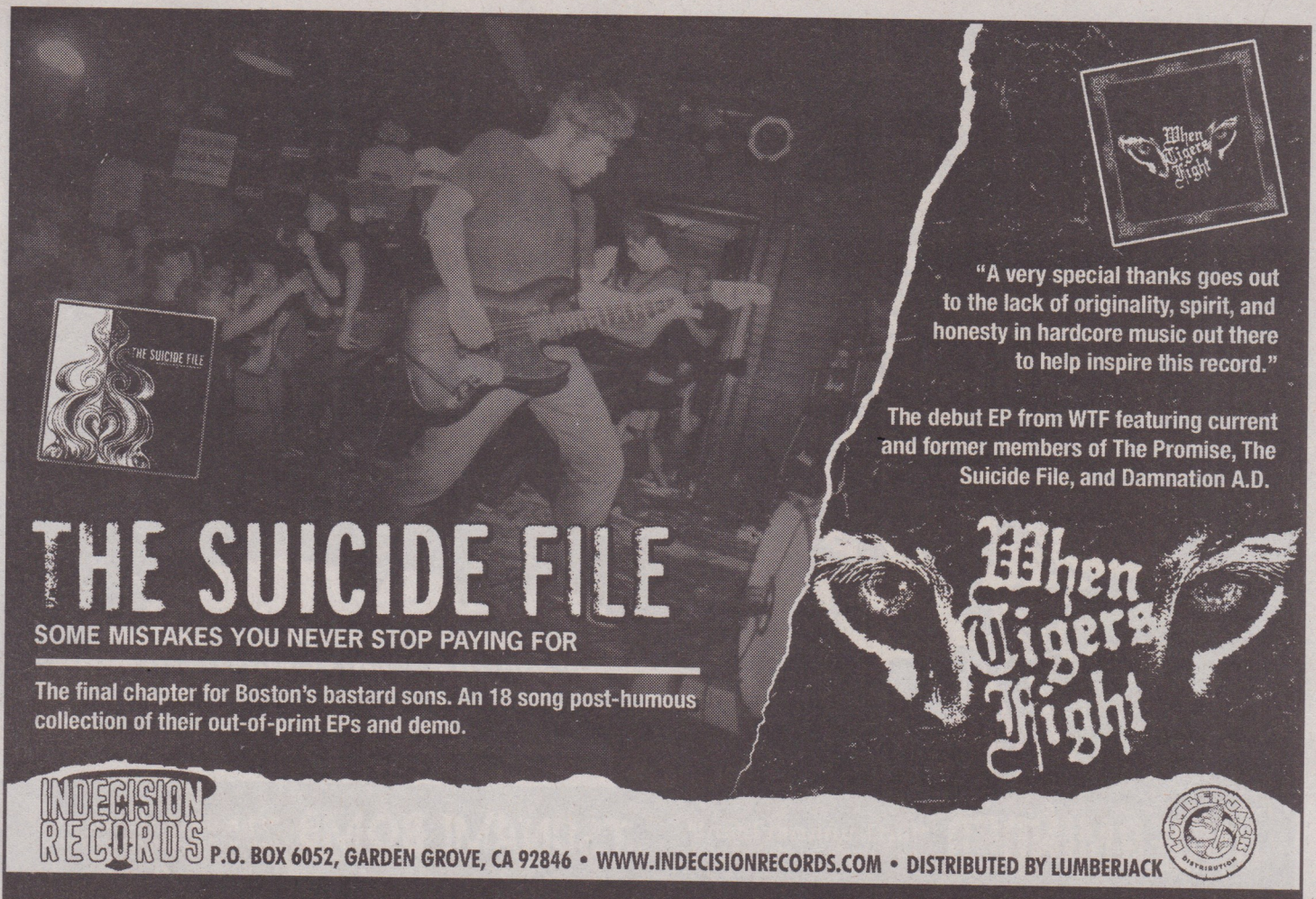
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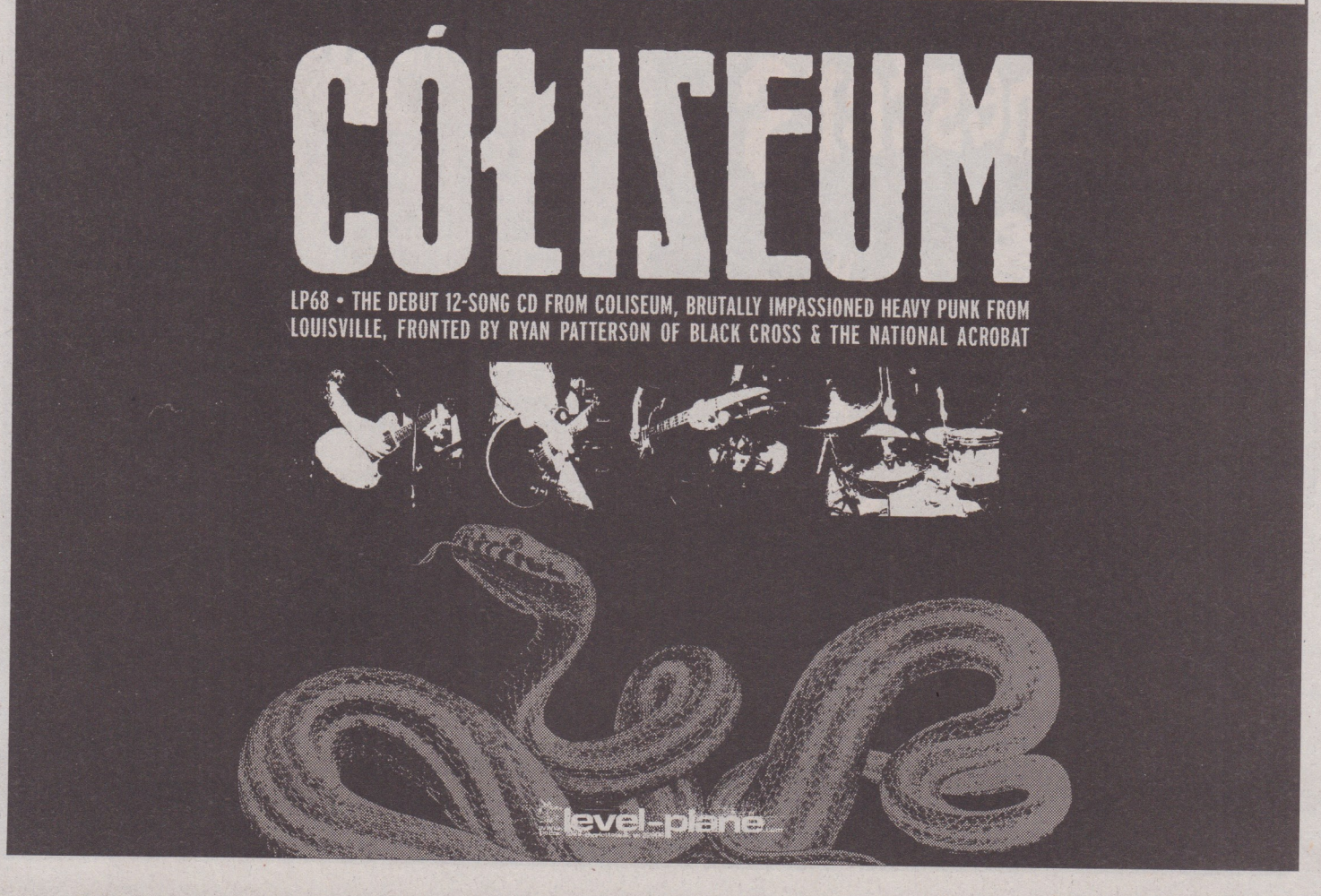
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FEAR BEFORE THE MARCH OF FLAMES

By Kristofer Todd Upjohn

"We definitely like to think that what we do... is intelligent and thought out," Dave Marion of Fear Before the March of Flames told me. "We appreciate music. That's why we're doing it. We're out here to have fun and be ourselves." Well, then, Dave must be serious about having fun and depth and intelligence must be part of his being himself. For full tilt fun screaming metalcore that this is (this being the band's new disc "Art Damage"), intelligence arises like the Kraken from the ocean depths in sharp, highly distilled razor lines of lyrics (lyrics which issue forth from Dave's mouth in a voice second only to the screeching of Zao for this brand of metalcore vockattack).

In "Hey Kid. I'm a Computer. Stop All the Downloading" you seem to be making a sweeping indictment of society. Is that so or is there a more specific target in mind with these lyrics?

(The question) definitely touches on what we're doing.

A mentality asleep and spoon fed by cog machine authorities, be it cops, corporations or CD companies, to witless kids who need not be witless seems to be the target of Dave's scathing attack in this song (whose title was lifted from a line used in an indie cartoon bit that aspires stylistically to Adult Swim's persona.) Forge on with individuality.

While it might strike some (as it did me at first), there's a huge focus shift from the world out there (the kids) and the sudden introspection that introduces itself on such tracks as "Consequences David. You'll Meet Your Fate in the Styx." Yes, David is Mr. Dave Marion himself, a fact which I densely failed to grasp or even grasp at before I asked this bloody obvious question I foolishly posed: "Is David anybody in particular?"

"It's me," responds Dave. "I'm David." The song, which I can with more justification say I was unsure of in terms of interpretation as there is a glorious and stubborn obliqueness with a bastard sword to the lyrics in "Art Damage," many of which were written by Dave this time around. David's 'Consequences' is about "the things that go through your head when you're trying to make a decision on something."

These odd lyrical stylings don't go unrespected though. Lines such as "Sold to the vampire and his lovely establishment/If integrity were a wooden spike, we'd all be fucked" do find appeal, sideways slanting though they may be.

Do you find that your fans are engaged by some of the oblique songwriting or have you run across those baffled by the lyrics?

Kids seem to connect. They like the lyrics, Dave believes. In this case, the lyrics are a





reference, to reduce it to a generalization, the music industry. The interviewee seems to have little use for the shallowness he's endured on his musical journey. "You can tell from the cover of the album we've seen a lot of bullshit," Dave said.

Speaking of going through bullshit, there is the tune "The State of Texas vs. Fear Before." To break it down to the essentials, some kids - one night after a show - took Fear Before on a little trip out to a supposedly haunted old asylum or somesuch. The cops showed up and before they knew it, these metalcore maestros were gagged and bound in Southern style red tape.

You wrote a song called "The God Awful Truth". What is the god awful truth?
A concept of not becoming something you hate.

Fear of falling out. Maintaining integrity. Not becoming a flickering speck of late night post-programming television static. Meaninglessness surrounded by meaningless. (Perhaps here we find the heart of the preacher's statement in the biblical book of Ecclesiastes: "Vanity of vanities, everything is vanity!")

Drug references in negative light abound in the lyrical compositions of Fear Before the March of the Flames. (Do you see any irony that this band's CD title is short and pithy?) Words pop up ferociously. Overdose ... spike in the punch ... quick fixes ... I keep them in the medicine cabinet ... street peddler's miracle juice ...

Though on the surface it would be easy to assume these were anti-drug sentiments on edge, Dave had already told me the band wasn't a band of straightedgers. So I knew this wasn't some kind of anti-substance propaganda.

However, I was surprised at how on target banal the true answer was.

Are you advocates of the straight-edger philosophy or is there a more subtle meaning behind these references?
You can lose everything you have so quickly.

Dave's message, it seems, is cautionary, not prohibitive. A relief.

"They're coming with forks and knives to eat us alive. Victims in this cannibalistic race."

"Let's pry her ribs open and bathe in her chest."

"You see you sold me quick fixes in the past. I keep them in my medicine cabinet ... but you should see what I keep in my closet."

"Push the corpses into the gutter."

"Off with his head! Off with his head!"

"To start we'll lop off your head."

Like the drug utterances above, these lines were lifted directly from the lyrics of Fear Before.

And don't forget the vampire motif.

What's your motivation for employing images such as these? (I don't mean this as a criticism, incidentally; I love the lyrics.)
I never realized it was that much until you said that!

"I like imagery like that," Dave told me. "It's just cool, I guess." He agreed its attention getting-ness might have something to do with the appeal as well. Shock always rocks.

And Fear Before the March of Flames will always rock, as well.

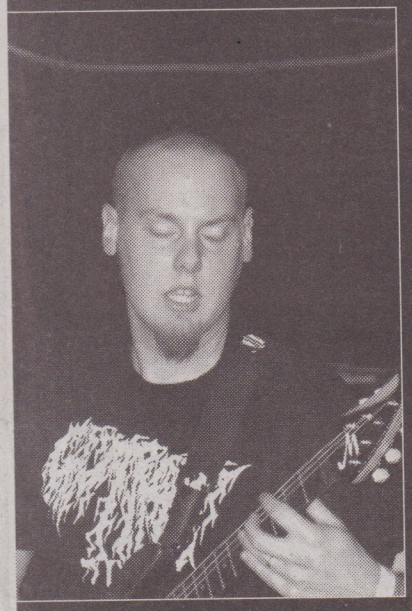
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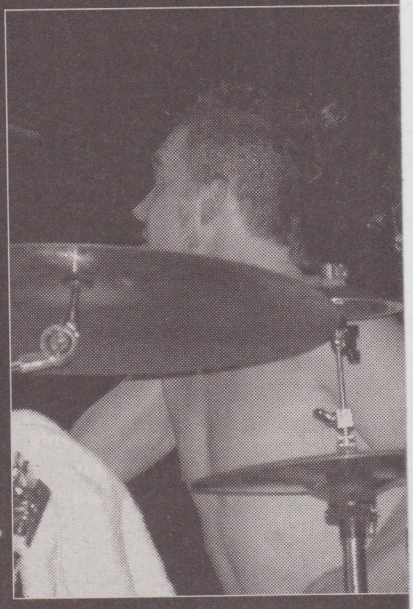














THE FIGHT

By Janelle Jones

Straight off the heels of releasing their debut full-length, 'Nothing New Since Rock 'N' Roll' (in Europe, anyway, the album saw daylight in the States in mid-November), The Fight vocalist/guitarist/co-songwriter K8! discussed the album (a record teeming with fun, raucous pop-punk), the band (which also includes drummer Jak, bassist Matt, and guitarist Scott), their rather dull English town, touring, and, to this interviewer's delight, the merits of the one and only John Lydon.

Where are you now?
I am in L.A. Yeah, it's cool.

What are you doing there?
Just interviews, had a photo shoot yesterday, went into the studio for a few days to do some overdubs and stuff. Hanging out.

I just have to say it's really great to speak with you because out of the [way too] many interviews I've done, I think now, with you, I've only spoken with four women. I think that's a really sad statistic.
It's kinda weird, isn't it?

I wanted to know how you feel about, you know, you read stuff on the Internet about bands [reviews, etc] and sometimes people make comments, and whenever there's a girl in a band, there's always non-music related comments, you know what I mean?
Yeah, totally. I always expect it, you know what I mean? I knew it was gonna be like that. You take it as it comes kinda-thing.

Anyway... So, you guys got together in 2000. There haven't been any line-up changes?
Yeah, there've been a few line-up changes. We have a different bass player now and a different guitarist than what we started out with. But the band as we are now, we've been together for pretty much since... I don't know, quite a while. I don't even know how long.

And what's your hometown like?
Dudley is a really small town, there's not a lot going on there. It's mostly full of old people, I guess. There's no scene there. There's one venue that no one ever plays at and that's it pretty much. Lots of bars and lots of pubs and things like that, but that's it, really.

You guys, yourselves, are all pretty young, right?
The rest of the band is 18, I'm 20, so yeah.

And okay, so you had an EP ['Home Is Where the Hate Is'] out before the album and that was on Fat Wreck Chords. I don't know the truth, I mean, I heard things that you guys were going to be on a major label?
Yeah. We were signed to MCA and then the whole Geffen thing got in the way, so we kind of, I don't know, they didn't wanna work with us, so we had to argue to get the album back. And then we got it back and we put it through Repossession [Records] then.

Right, and when you put out the EP on Fat. Were you officially signed with them?

We just signed a one-deal thing. It was amazing to be able to put that out on Fat and we just knew we wanted to do one with them, so we just signed for one.

And with this album, what were you guys going for musically, lyrically?
We weren't really going for anything, we just kind of wrote it and played it and it ended up that way, you know what I mean? I don't know how it turned out that way. It's just the way it did. But at the time we were listening to a lot of Green Day, New Found Glory, that kind of thing, so I guess you can kind of see that coming through slightly.

How does it differ from the previous EP?
I think it just follows it onward. The EP is kind of an introduction to us obviously, that was the first thing we were going to put out. On the album, we followed it up as – the album's basically, I know it sounds stupid, but a week in the life of The Fight or whatever. It's what we do and who we are. We just write about things that we know 'cause there's no point in writing about stuff we don't really know about. That's it. It just kinda happened that way.

And about the lyrics, are you the sole lyricist?
No, me and Jak both wrote it together, but I write most of it, yeah.

And musically it's everyone?
No, it's me and Jak still, we write everything.

That song "Karaoke Star", does it have anything to do with the group you were in prior to The Fight?
A lot of people ask that. It kind of starts off from that, but it's not really directed at them. It's just about [how] there's a lot of pop artists at the moment that basically sing the backing tracks that someone else has written for them, so they're basically just like karaoke singers. And it's just aimed at that whole market of these artists that don't write for themselves, they get told what to say, where to go, it's just aimed at that whole thing.

"...at the time New Found Glory was my favorite band and it was just an amazing thing, and to know they liked us too and actually went out there and got us a deal and stuff, it's so amazing."

Right. In the press release, there's something that mentioned 'Kerrang!' deeming you the "next big thing." When you hear stuff like that do you feel pressure or you're just happy people think that way?
Well, I've always been a big fan of 'Kerrang!' magazine... When I read that I was amazed. I was just pleased and overwhelmed and could not believe they would say that about us because it's amazing. I don't think we feel pressure because as long as we get to play shows and be on the road, that's all that matters to us. There's no pressure to have to go sell loads and loads of records 'cause as long as we can stay on the road, that's all that counts. But still, it was pretty damn amazing to read that!

How many tours have you done here?
I think six maybe? Yeah, six.

You played Warped Tour too, right?
Yeah, we did like five dates on it last year. That was a dream come true to play Warped Tour. So amazing.

Yeah, so I read about how you guys got your music out there. It's pretty interesting. You know, how that just fell into place...
Oh, the whole Chad [Gilbert, New Found Glory guitarist] thing. Yeah, it's seriously one of those things that's just the case of being in the right place at the right time and luck as well, being really lucky. People ask me about it now and [say], "That doesn't sound like a realistic story at all." It doesn't sound real at all, but it is. It's crazy.

But also, anyone can give a demo out, but you have to really impress in order for the band to actually listen and do something about it.
Yeah, at the time New Found Glory was my favorite band and it was just an amazing thing, and to know they liked us too and actually went out there and got us a deal and stuff, it's so amazing. [For those unfamiliar: The Fight handed their demo to one of NFG's roadies, which later found it's way to Chad, who subsequently passed it onto Fat Mike, and the rest, as they say, is history.]

What would you like people to know about The Fight?
I want people to know that we are a very, very fun band and that every time we play a show it's all about people having a good time.

I noticed on your Website you have little bios for everyone. [Laughs] I love that you put John Lydon for the person who should rule the world.
He's such a cool person, isn't he?

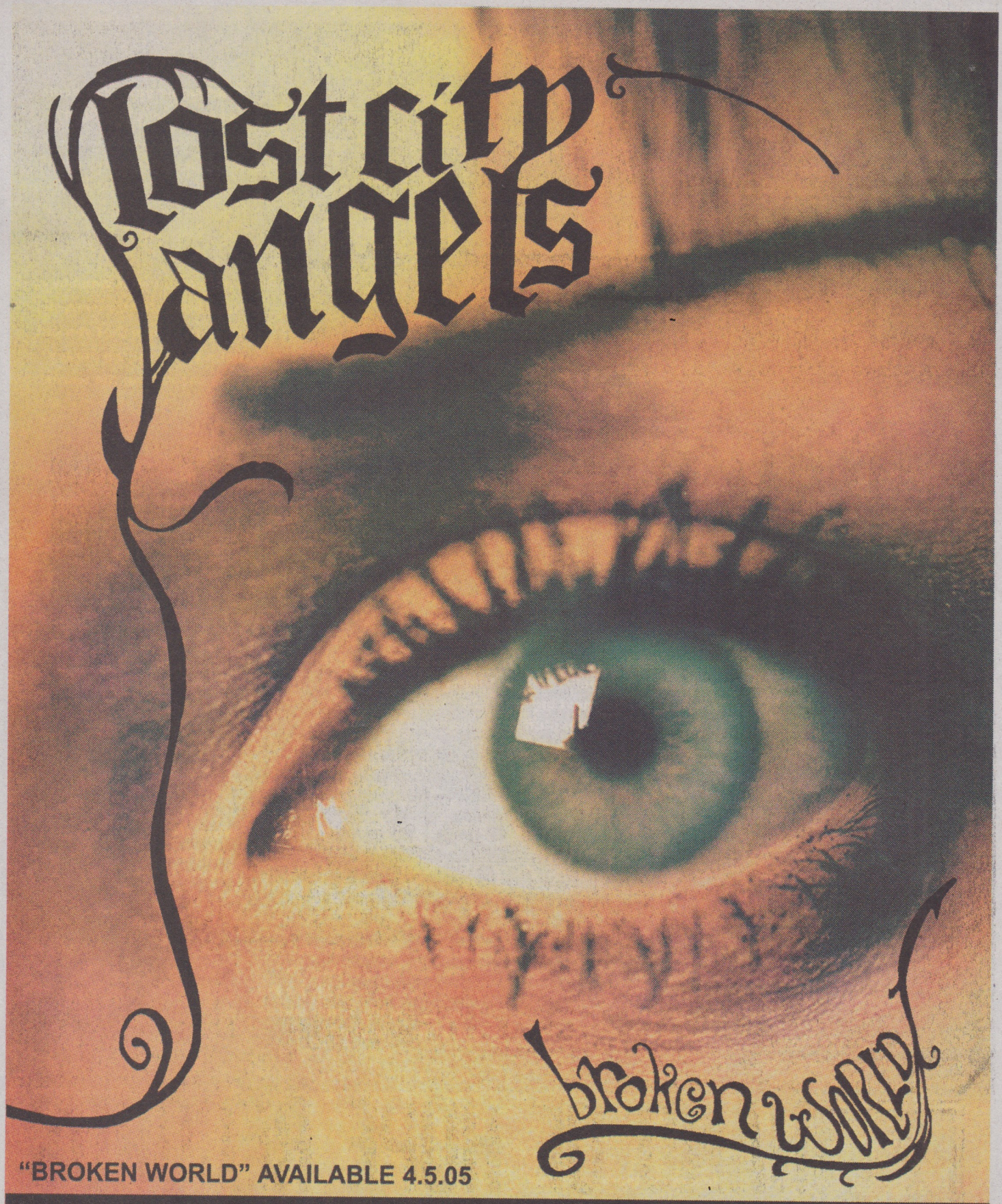
I love how he's so bold and says what's on his mind. He just doesn't care at all...
He's so quick and witty; he's so great, man.

So many people hate him because he tells it like it is and people don't like that at all.
That's exactly what I like about him. I wanna meet him. I haven't had the chance to meet him yet, but I'm sure one day, hopefully.

When the record came out over there, did you have any release parties or shows?
Actually, I don't know why we haven't. The album came out in England I think last week and I was here, so I guess we're gonna party when I get home... I think we should.

Is there anything you wanna add that we didn't go over?
I just want to add the fact that people should come see us play basically and if they wanna have a fun time, they should come out.

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ANTiSEEN



By Janelle Jones

Truthfully, I hadn't a clue what to expect going into this interview. It IS Jeff Clayton, after all, frontman for the infamously un-PC, bold, and angry North Carolina trash-rockers ANTiSEEN. Luckily my worst fears were allayed early on, as Jeff, though predictably forthright (definitely a good thing), proved to be really cool – dare I say friendly, even! – and willing to open up about everything related to his band, which in 2003 celebrated their momentous twentieth anniversary.

After all this time they're far from backing down, what with so much in the works, including the release of their latest album on TKO, *Badwill Ambassadors*. Clever title, right? We have one crappy review of their last LP, *Boys from Brutalsville*, to thank for that little gem. Yeah, amazing but not everyone "gets" these good old boys…but they wouldn't have it any other way. Do you really believe THEY care about what YOU think?!

First of all, we have to talk about the new record. I got a burned copy. I don't have artwork or anything…
Too bad.

[Laughs] But *Badwill Ambassadors*. The name says it all, huh?!
Right.

It's definitely got the classic sound. Have you guys ever been criticized in keeping with…you know how sometimes people either criticize you for changing or criticize for keeping with [the same sound]?
We've gotten criticized for both, believe it or not. [Laughs] We've had people say it's just another ANTiSEEN record or whatever. When we started to actually give a damn about the production value, people thought we were getting too slick. [Laughs] The first time we ever did something with Jack Endino, after it was done, he goes, "Well, ANTiSEEN fans everywhere are gonna hate my guts." [Laughs] So we've been criticized for both, but we're such fans of bands like Motorhead, The Ramones, and AC/DC, those are groups that probably get the same type of treatment: well, hell, if you like one, I guess you'll like 'em all.

"Fuck the Kids," that song is wonderful.
Thank you.

The first time I heard it I'm like that song is so great. [Both laugh] "This is for the crusty dirty little shits." Is that one group that annoys the hell out of you?
I guess at this point in our career almost everybody annoys us. [Laughs] But it all came with a conversation we had with the guy who used to run Baloney Shrapnel Records (who used to put out some of our old records), and he was talking about one time he did something just to annoy Glenn Danzig and at the end he was going up the stairway and he just stuck his head around the corner and said, "Glenn! What about the kids?!" And [Danzig] goes, "Fuck the kids!" So after that, the whole tour we were doing of Europe, every time we'd say something like, "Let's do it for the kids," then we'd all just go, "Fuck the kids!" [Both laugh] And just I don't know, I guess all the old generations kinda look weird at the new generations coming up. But I guess it's just a natural thing. Everybody thinks the group coming after them is not as – I don't know – valid. I don't really believe that as far as me, but I think a lot of people do. It was just

"To me the funniest thing in the world is to see a band that takes themselves way too serious... I think a lot of groups and people – and not even just people in bands – take themselves way too serious. Sometimes you gotta be able to step back and even take a laugh at yourself. I just wonder how some people get through life just being so serious all the time."

taking a lighthearted jab at that whole situation.

I kinda understand that in a way because now "punk" is so safe, but you guys are crude and rude and you got a sense of humor and don't give a shit. So what does punk mean to you?
Basically what it always meant, as far as I was concerned, was taking this art form, or any art form for that matter, whether it be writing, painting, photography, whatever, and just doing with it what you want to and not following any guidelines. All that started to go by the wayside really fast and early… The whole DC thing with the straight-edge and all that, to me, that was like going completely against why we were even into punk to start with. And then as the punk meaning got to be what it is today, we just kinda even dropped using the term punk rock anymore and just used rock because that's where every bit of it comes from is a form of rock 'n' roll. And just to say you're punk rock anymore, people automatically think of Green Day or NOFX or something like that.

Or even worse...emo stuff...
[Laughs] But I guess pretty early on a label became so unimportant to us anymore. We just kinda [went with] what the whole name of the band was: ANTiSEEN – anti any scene you got: hardcore, straight-edge, skate punk, blah blah blah, whatever, black metal. Who cares? You either like it or you don't. And some people have to have stuff categorized and labeled for 'em before they can accept it, and I always thought that was silly. I think when you do that you miss out on a lot of really good things.

Well, a lot of people are close-minded.
Exactly. If it don't fit within those guidelines, they ain't having it, and that's ridiculous. I mean, I hardly agreed with anything The Clash ever said politically, but I love 'em. I'm the kinda guy that'll let somebody have an opinion different from mine; I don't care. Don't mean I have to believe it.

But can people that listen to ANTiSEEN, differ with the band's opinions?
Probably not. [Both laugh]

I had to ask that.
But you know what? There's one thing about our records that we've always had and probably even more so with *Badwill Ambassadors*, is like people don't know (and we're sure as hell not gonna tell 'em) how much of it is just a joke and how much of it is serious. If somebody listens to it and takes every single word on the thing serious and just cannot believe it, I'm not gonna tell 'em different; I don't care. If they get upset, they can be upset. Thing is they're gonna go talk about it, and if somebody listens to it and goes, "They can't be serious about that, that's just too far-fetched," I'm not gonna go, "Oh no, we're 100 percent…" I just let people have their own idea of what can be taken as truth and what can be taken as a little jab. And a lot of times they're completely wrong. [Laughs]

So many people lack a sense of humor, but it's funny in a way...
To me the funniest thing in the world is to see a band that takes themselves way too serious. That's hilarious. I can't even think of anybody right at this minute, but to see – I guess a bunch of them are in that black metal genre, I reckon, you know, that talk about how their music is gonna start Armageddon and all this. [Laughs] Whatever. I think a lot of groups and people – and not even just people in bands – take themselves way too serious. Sometimes you gotta be able to step back and even take a laugh at yourself. I just wonder how some people get through life just being so serious all the time.

It just makes me think about one of the songs on the new record: "Pledge Allegiance to the Bomb." So, what's your take on the current political situation?
It's a really bad situation. I'm not pleased with it. I don't like a lot of these people going around blaming everything on President Bush. I think he's done the best he can under the circumstances. Who does make all the proper decisions when it comes to wars? I don't think anybody does, and people wanna start screaming and crying about Bush lied, Bush this, Bush that. Well, you know what? I'd like for any of those people to find me a politician that didn't. Just me personally, just as not taking a stance with any party politically and not even taking things very logical, I just think the world would be a better place if we just took [places] that seem to be breeding grounds for terrorists and just level 'em. That's the way I think, even though I know that ain't gonna happen and it can't happen, there's a part of me that really wishes it would. And that's pretty much where the basis for that song came about. Not that we think anyone's gonna listen to us and actually drop the A-bomb on Iraq or Afghanistan, we just want people to know not everybody is against the war per se.

With the record you feel you accomplished everything you set out to?
Yeah, I believe so. We weren't really looking to go into a big different direction. The thing that's different about this one is that most of it was written by our bass player and drummer, which is a big change from the way things used to be, and I think it's just because they've been with us long enough now that they know how things work. It's not that they just wrote everything and brought it to the band and said, "Here it is." You know, "Pledge Allegiance to the Bomb" or something, we discussed and talked about the kind of direction we wanted to go in with it, and someone brings up the lyrics and then we fine-tune that and then whoever's got the tune ready to go, we work with that. I think hardly anything is ever one guy's pet project from beginning to end. By the time it's done with the original idea the first person may have had, it's completely different, and we were real happy to get The Cosmic Commander and The Dean of Sods on one album together. They've been on a few of our albums before, but never together – oh no, they have been on one together, *Eat More Possum*, but that was a long time ago. That's always fun to get them involved with these albums and just to make a fun, mean, fast, hard record is all we wanted to do, and I think we did it.

Also you guys have the 20-year anniversary DVD out now.
Have you seen that yet?

Yes, I have. Now, this Wall of Barbed Wire, has that come out again or was that a one-time thing?
Oh man. [Laughs] We've done barbed-wire shows before that, but that was probably the most spectacular one of all. No, we haven't done it since then. You can't really tell on the DVD, but man, every time I would walk through that thing and walk back, I was getting cut to pieces. [Laughs] For three days after that show I could barely walk. It don't look like it. I was just walking around. But my leg would get caught and I'd pull it real hard and there'd be a big gash, you couldn't even see it. By the time the show was over, me and my wife were getting the Neosporin just going all over me. [Laughs] Maybe if I wore all white like Freddie Mercury or something you could've seen it better.

That's a pretty long and thorough set.
It was the longest show we've ever done. Not too happy about that, but… [Laughs]

You had the blood on you for a while...!
Right. Our shows are usually 15 or 16 songs and maybe we'll do 20, but that show's like 35.

And TKO is reissuing a lot of your stuff.
They already reissued all of the back-catalogue. The stuff they're doing next (aside from *Badwill Ambassadors)* is a thing called *The Dawn of ANTiSEEN*, which is gonna be a bunch of the demos for some of the albums that we would do in pre-production and some of the tapes that were done before we did our first record that had never seen the light of day, that kinda stuff. They're also putting out an ANTiSEEN tribute record. It's already got some good people. Hank Williams III is gonna be on it and a shitload of other bands. It's probably gonna end up being a two-disc thing I think. It's gonna be called *Everybody Loves ANTiSEEN*. [Both laugh]

Nice. I saw something about a book [*Destructo Maximus*]. What's this about?
It's a big thing. It's something we worked on probably since 2000 and it came out earlier this year. I don't think we ever worked so hard on anything in our lives, I know I haven't. I've been a packrat ever since the beginning; I've saved everything. I threw it all in a van and took it to Philadelphia where we went through it all trying to pick out the stuff that was best to use. I've also documented everything almost from the very beginning, you know, as far as pictures and everything. There's literally hundreds and hundreds of pictures from our whole career in there, the words to all our songs, flyer gallery, list of people that have covered us, and it's broken into five-year periods: you get the first five years at the beginning, then the second, third, fourth, and all that. And then it's got a bunch of stuff in there about our association with GG Allin and all that business. It'll take you a while to look through, that's for sure. [Laughs]

Here's a nice tired and clichéd question: how do you think you've lasted all these years and are still going with the band?
One of the main things I think was not turning it into a full-time job because knowing our personalities this would've ended a long time ago had it gone that way. I think continuing just to have fun with it is one of the main things. If it stopped being fun, I mean, you've heard it before, clichéd answer to a clichéd question, if it stopped being fun we'd stop doing it. But then again I also think there's a part of us that just knowing that maybe one or two people (there's probably a helluva lot more) just knowing there's that many people that would really enjoy the fact that we packed it in probably keeps us from doing it. [Laughs] By the way in the book, it wasn't completely biased. We ended up printing a lot of our negative reviews just because we love those just as much as we love the positive ones 'cause honestly those seem to sell more CDs for us than the positive ones. [Laughs] ...They're just hilarious. People just trying to rip us to pieces, but ended up being complimentary whether they know it or not. [Laughs] It's hard to make us mad by insulting us 'cause you can't really. The worst thing (probably shouldn't say this to a reporter) the thing that makes us the maddest is to be ignored. [Laughs]

All right. Now I know.
Negative reviews, man, we'll take 'em all day long, we don't care. It's when people say nothing is when we go, "Hey man, that's not very good!"

Also about sticking around, you said when it stops being fun or whatever, but I'm sure you have more people to piss off.
Oh yeah. This new batch of people seem to get pissed off really easy. It's not even a challenge.

Nowadays, 'cause everyone's so...
Yeah, 'cause everyone's so PC and crybaby. A long time ago you pretty much had to really try to piss people off and once you did, you were branded that way. But goddamn, man, today, you could just not even be trying and you could have people crying all over the place. It's amazing.

How about, I'm sure there are a few, but a big misconception you find people to have of ANTiSEEN?
That we're white supremacists. We get that a lot: people thinking we're hardcore racists – just because we say things that don't jive with the way most of the population is being whipped into thinking. We all of a sudden get branded as racists, and we've probably – I'll just go ahead and say it – we have said some things that would be considered racist, I guess, but that's just the whole thing about not pulling punches. It's just like TV. TV can put down white Southern people all day long, you can do hillbilly jokes, you can do incest jokes, oh your cousin is your mother, and it's fine. Say that about another race and you set off a damn time bomb. [Pauses] Damn, I got off the subject.

Well, since we were talking about DC before, I'm thinking of Minor Threat "Guilty of Being White".
I even wonder if they could do that song today.

Exactly. I don't think so.
Back then it wasn't seen as being racist, I don't think. It was just saying basically what a lot of people think: I'm being persecuted for something I didn't do; it was done 200 years ago. I don't think they could've done that song today and put [it] out. There's no way 'cause even with the good intentions of that song and the message, people just won't have it. They just won't have it. You can't say anything. Now we're back on what we were talking about. [Laughs] We're not gonna not touch something because people are gonna cry. I don't give a goddamn. If all the little vegetarian punks out there are getting mad and start little Webzines and trash us completely, say we're a bunch of fat old morons, I DON'T care. As long as you spell ANTiSEEN right, I don't care! There's tons of shit out there when I hear it for the first time, I just go goddamn! But rather than give them advertising I just ignore it and go about my way. Luckily a lot of people can't do that, and we sell CDs when they don't just go their own way. I'm serious. You wouldn't believe the e-mails we get from people who go, "Yeah, read your review on such and such Webzine, the guy trashed ya, here's 14 bucks, send me the CD." [Laughs] Because when certain people just cry and whine about the same thing over and over, you can pretty much tell that if this guy hates it, I'm gonna love it. A long time ago that's how I used to gauge reviews in MRR. There were a few writers that I would just know that if these writers hated something, that it was pretty much up my alley, and that's how I discovered a lot of bands...

Talking about clichéd things, is there anything you get sick of talking about, maybe like working with GG or something?
Yeah, I do get tired talking about that. Especially for the longest time it seemed like that's all anyone wanted to talk about, and even though our guitar player Joe is real into politics, the band I don't think so much presents itself as being political, but we get asked about politics an awful lot. I don't understand it, but I guess it's just something you talk about. [Laughs] I don't know where that comes from. That gets old sometimes. The whole 'are you racist?'

People actually come out and say that?
Oh yeah, they do. So, are you guys racist? Yeah.

[Sarcastically] Actually...
[Laughter]

And then they print it.
Yeah. It's just like whenever – I forget who Steel Cage was talking to – but they were talking about the book and wanting this company to carry it, and the company says, "Well, I don't know; aren't these guys kinda racist and stuff? He goes, "Well, you can ask the black guy that used to play bass for 'em or the two Jews who put the book out." [Laughs] And they're just like, "But I heard they covered a Skrewdriver song." And all you gotta do to dodge that question is go, "But it was off their first album." "Oh! Okay, well, it's all right then. That was safe Skrewdriver." It's weird; people really like to talk about that, though.

In that case, what would you like people to know about the band?
Basically just a few things you touched on just talking to me. We do have a sense of humor; it's not all doom and gloom and we hate everybody even though we do get irritated by people. [Laughs] And that we do have pretty deep musical roots. If you took what all of us like and know a lot about as far as music goes, a lot of people would be really surprised at some of the stuff we're into as individuals. And just know that the stuff is not just carbon copying what came before us or aping something that's around now. It's pretty much our own thing and if it sounds redundant or if it sounds beaten to death or rehashed, so be it, but that's just the way ANTiSEEN does what ANTiSEEN does.

www.antiseen.com ↖

THEE WHISKEY REBEL

A FEW POST HOLIDAY THOUGHTS FOR THE WICKED.

Yeah, I've been an agnostic for most of my life. Still, like lots of other non-Christian folks in the U.S. I participate in the Christmas hoopla that takes place every year. It's not about Jesus...it's not about Santa (well it's more about Santa than Jesus in our home), it's about workers having a couple DAYS OFF from work. I even took a few nights off from Ebay. It's also about getting sauced repeatedly for a period of a few weeks ranging from early Xmas parties to New Year's Day while cramming your gut with festive holiday foods.

It's about hanging out with relatives. In addition to spending rare time with loved ones rarely seen throughout the year, it's also unfortunately about seeing asshole relations you don't want to see.

It's a bitter sweet holiday complete with Christmas bonuses and in some cases unwanted Christmas layoffs. It's about receiving cheerful Christmas cards...and then cussing out loud because you forgot to send one to the sender.

It's a rare time for divorced parents to see their kids...and run up their credit cards buying gifts to try to prove they "love" the brats more than the other parent. It's a time when TV and radio are saturated with overplayed, hokey, bad music and Xmas episodes that really suck when you think about it. It's a time for the lonely alkies and drug monsters to gather in the handful of losers' lounges that remain open to get plastered.

It's an inescapable holiday season that you may as well learn to come to grips with in some way unless you are a recluse to a magnitude I've never explored. I know of a lot of infamous non-Christian people...musicians, writers, etc. who celebrate Christmas to a level that you might have a hard time believing.There's nothing hypocritical about that. Even members of management and devout union and commie haters take Labor Day off. Who among us non believing heathens haven't crammed our faces with Easter candy or dragged Mother out to breakfast at some over crowded glorified pancake house on that lovely holiday?? HHMM??

I indulge in a few personal holiday pleasures just for the hell of it. A year round beer and shot drinker, I drink mixed drinks often this time of year...like Seagram's 7 and ginger ale or squirt. What the hell?? We have tons of Xmas lights strung up everywhere. I like 'em. This is the time of year it gets dark early.

They're pretty handy to brighten things up a bit. I can suspend my bitter agnosticism long enough to have a laugh or two watching our goddamned cats open "presents" containing their favorite narcotic...catnip. Is that a contradiction of my alleged "evil" philosophical beliefs??

I had a horrid upbringing for the most part thanks to my parents' radical fundamentalist church. Should I be too pissed off to eat little spritely spritz cookies at 6:00 a.m. when I'm preparing to sleep off another drinking bout? Christmas was one of the good times of the year when I was growing up. The Christians were on their best behavior and made an effort (unconvincing as it was) to declare love for all of mankind. HAH!!

Some people bitch about the commercialism of Christmas...I say BAH HUM BUG!! That's one of the GOOD aspects of it. I've always loved getting gifts and can't remember giving one I didn't feel like giving. It's a nice, quaint but positive custom.You may think I've flipped my wig, but I think noisy atheists who kvetch about public Christmas decor or crosses posted on hills over looking their home towns make asses of themselves. Where are these people the rest of the year?? Why aren't they fighting the Christians in August or February?? If they were really committed we'd see them year round instead of only this time of year taking cheap shots for media attention.

If you're truly a committed heathen (and I know of a few who read this column regularly) I suggest you walk the walk year round and not just try to piss on a rather harmless holiday that in actuality twists religious hokum into a ritual of bacchanalial indulgence. If you actually are able to ignore all the trappings of Xmas...and express your loathing of Christianity and its asinine symbols year around...well, I admire your individuality. I don't see how you're able to pull it off...although I've been around drug users with habits who came damned close; most of them wound up at Mom's place on Christmas eve though.

Bottom line: I suggest you emulate my wise dumbass cats Dixie and Mr. Jinx...and just suck up whatever holiday treats come your way. Cram your gut with available food...drink with gusto. Accept gifts that come your way. Gaze at the pretty little colored lights. You don't need to take it anymore seriously than Dixie who has never heard of Jesus H. Christ...and gets so wiped on catnip he ends up trying to eat pine needles from the frigging Xmas tree.

I recently read a book that Ted Nugent wrote. Of course he wouldn't approve of my alcoholic lifestyle...whether I "function" or not; and we sure don't see eye to eye on religion...but I enjoyed the book and respect the man's love of guns, guitars and wolfing down platters of game on Thanksgiving Day.

I don't write about guns much...because I don't own one. Why?? Because my Wife thinks I'll lose my temper and kill myself or all of us or somebody else in anger. She may be right. If I had a gun around here I might've used it on somebody by now. I go through severe mood changes. Luckily, alcohol puts me in a better frame of mind.

I do agree with Ted that society is better off with guns in the hands of individuals who have been trained how to own and use them safely. I back my gun totin' friends to the hilt. I don't hunt...but that doesn't mean I don't back my hunter friends right to do so. I'm on Ted's side here for damn sure.

Get this...I'll reveal a little bit about a subject I usually steer clear of...some genetic family history. Oddly enough as it may seem to you, my paternal Grandfather (NOT the Father of the man who raised me up) hunted and fished in the hills of Southern Oregon to feed his family into the 1950's. This isn't a pipe dream...I've discussed it in depth with an Uncle an Aunt and of course my Grannie. He was evidently quite a marksman. The man's genes contributed to my make up obviously. I may have a lurking talent for the outdoors I've never had a chance to explore. Who knows?? If I hadn't spent my childhood weekends mowing lawns on Saturday and going to church services all day Sunday maybe I could've wound up with a whole different set of hobbies. Maybe I'd take up where ol' Grandpa left off??

As it is I went fishing several times as a teenager, but when I eventually caught fish I couldn't eat 'em. Sorry...it's a psychological thing. It's probably like Ted says in his book: you simply have to be raised up to the ways of tracking and killing your own food by the time you're 10 years old or so. I don't expect everybody to be like ME. If you hunt and fish...or just like to collect weapons...BULLY FOR YOU. I've gone to many a gun show...its fun. Like my pal Jim Goad pointed out in depth (I believe in an issue of Answer me!..I'm not attempting to quote him word for word here) you certainly meet an "interesting" (to say the least) breed of people at gun shows.

Back to Ted. I thought his book was fun to read...even though he hates godless drinkers like me. Obviously a lot of people who are idealistically opposed to hunting, eating meat, carrying guns, etc. will disagree radically with a lot of this book. Well, so be it. For that matter a lot of folks (including Ted) think that anti-gun folks, vegans and a certain breed of extreme animal riots advocates are wacko's too. I'm perfectly happy disagreeing with all of you to an extent. My life would be much more boring if I only read books that rehashed over and over my own personal beliefs. I enjoyed Malcolm X's book quite a bit even though I obviously part company with the man's religious beliefs as expressed in the latter half of the book. I enjoyed Russell Means life story a helluva lot too. For that matter I read Jim Bakers (!) book written after he served his time in prison and enjoyed it almost as much as Donny Osmond's introspective autobiography (no...I'm not kidding). If you limit your reading list to books that would be universally approved of by hardcore backers of one "cause" or another you're missing out. I personally loathe Paris Hilton (as you've read about in these pages) but if she had done anything in her life worth writing about...and the book showed up at my local library I'd check it out for sure. Why not??

Mr. Nugents political "involvement" is admirable. In one chapter he describes in detail an average day in his life. He's a very busy guy. If I had his money I'd probably just sit on my ass in motel rooms drinking beer and looking out the window much of the year. He's also got some great child rearing techniques (some of which are identical to mine). Maybe best of all the chapters in his book is his in depth description of how he spends his favorite day of the year...Thanksgiving Day. Even though it's been the worst day of several of my years, I felt myself sitting right there at his family table dining on wild turkey, grilled squirrel and other traditional culinary delights. If nothing else, after reading Ted's book I'll understand certain songs of his that were confusing me before. A hint: a lot of them are about hunting. URP.

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Visit the Whiskey Rebel online diary: www.WhiskeyRebel.com

SWEET POISON



By Aaron Zelus

Americans don't pay much attention to things outside of America; all this will change once they hear the music of Sweet Poison from Belgium. Sweet Poison were previously named the Riot Squad and had one CD EP and some compilation appearances under this name. They had to change their name due to legal reasons so now they are known as Sweet Poison. Things are looking up for them with tons of festivals and shows lined up in Europe, and they just finished up a short East coast US tour in July '04. Their full length was just released a few months ago both in Europe and the USA and more is soon to come...Sweet Poison guitarist David has a few things to say about this and more....

You're first CD EP "Another Heartbreak" under the old name the Riot Squad and your new full length "Yesterday's Sweethearts" under the new name Sweet Poison have noticeable differences. Did the name change represent a change in sound as well? How would you best describe your sound to fans?

Yeah, we definitely changed in sound while we went through the name change. The Riot Squad pushed us in the Oi! corner. Since we're not an Oi! band at all, we kinda felt limited because of the name. How would I describe the sound? I guess we play a mixture of old school punk and rock n' roll. Some people compare us to Social Distortion, The Bruisers....We've heard a lot of comparisons, but I think we're pretty original in our scene.

Lead Guitarist Kim sings a lot more backing vocals on "Yesterday's Sweethearts" which I think plays off of Bruno's lead vocals very well. Do you agree? And will we be hearing more of this in your future releases?

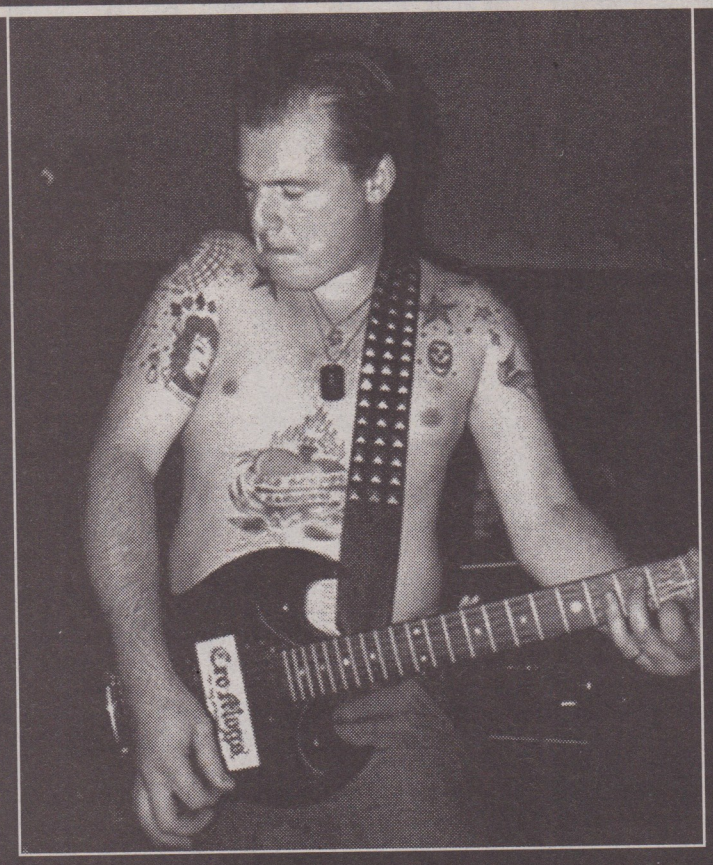
Yes, I agree and we are using that aspect even more. Kim has an amazing voice and Bruno's voice is getting better every time he sings. I promise you the new songs will be killer! Kim wrote them all and made sure that the dual vocals are amazing. Lots of people have told us that they really like the dual vocals and that it has become our trademark.

There is also the use of the piano occasionally in both your old songs and your newer songs. This somehow sounds really cool without sounding cheesy; I really like it when you guys add in the piano on a few of your songs. I noticed that guitarist Kim is the one who plays the piano on the tracks. Can she play any other instruments?

Other than the guitar and piano, she also plays the saxophone. She is studying to become a music teacher and is realizing a life-long dream of hers. My father is a music teacher as well, so he'll be able to pass the torch down to her. I agree, the piano parts sound cool; it is another thing that we have to definitely maintain in our sound.

You guys just finished up a short east coast USA tour, which ended in late July. How did it go? Any comparisons from the scenes in the US to Belgium, or even Europe in general that you could make? Did you have a favorite show?

It was killer! We had some small shows and some bigger ones. You guys are so spoiled with bands playing every night. We have like 2 shows in a month while you have 3 or 4 shows going on every day. Damn! Baltimore was a cool place to play, but the best show was our gig with Murphy's Law and the Antagonizers in Chapel Hill, NC. We had a great time, finally met Bruno from Street Anthem Records and saw a lot of places. The one thing that I noticed is that American people are more social and friendly than the people in Europe. Another thing is that they are so paranoid! I mean they think the government is following them everywhere and that there are cops waiting to bust their asses anytime of the day. (Or was





that just you Bruno?)The European crowds are usually bigger and are not that focused on image, I guess. I think they are in it for the music. I've seen a lot of kids in the US that are sooo into punk because of the image. But Europe has them as well…it's a worldwide thing, haha! But the whole US tour was awesome and we definitely want to go back next year for a bigger tour.

Tell us a little bit about the scene in Belgium. Most Americans don't know much about the country of Belgium, let alone the scene there. Is there one?
David: Oh yeah! It seems you guys only know Belgium for the waffles, chocolate, or Jean-Claude Van Damme, haha. We have a good thing going on. Bands like the Agitators, The Heartaches, and Funeral Dress are getting bigger and bigger. The old-school hardcore scene is the best one in the world right now. Bands like Dead Stop and Justice are getting rave reviews around the world. Lot's of kids into old-school hardcore right now. But it'll pass, like it always does. And then Streetpunk will be the hot thing again.

I tend to hear a strong Social Distortion influence when I listen to Sweet Poison. I love that, it's not overtly done but just enough which gives you guys a great sound. Is Social Distortion a large influence of yours?
You bet! I just got the new CD and it sounds like heaven. It's simply the best album of the decade and is the second best ever after their last album, White Light… They are probably our biggest influence, not denying that. But like you said, we try not to copy them too much…we have other influences as well. We listen to a lot of old-school American punk like 'Ramones', 'Misfits' and 'Dead Boys', but there's also the new bands like 'The Bones', 'Backyard Babies', 'The Staggers' and so on. But yes, Social D. is our favorite band of all time.

Tell us a little bit about your lyrics. I noticed Love and relationships are much more of a topic than, let's say, politics, in your songs. What would you say is the main influence in your lyrics?
Love, that's true. I'm not trying to get into politics. There's enough bands doing that and I don't really care about it. I like to write emotional songs and stories about heartbreak. I can't write about anything else! And I'm the only one who writes the lyrics in the band so I guess Sweet Poison will always be about love, hate, pain and sorrow… that's what I like to write about…just feels right to do it.

Give us a brief discography of all of your releases up until now.
Well, under the name The Riot Squad we did two demos, "In my Blood" and "Rebel Call." We appeared on the "Respect your Roots" album with all the best European Hardcore and punk bands covering all the old school stuff. We did "Taken by Surprise" by Poison Idea. That album was released by I-Scream Records. Last year we did the "Another Heartbreak" CD EP on Street Anthem Records. We released our new full length CD "Yesterday's Sweethearts" under the new name Sweet Poison in July through Street Anthem Records in the US and Bouncing Sole Records in Europe. We were also featured on the "Streetpunk Worldwide" Compilation with two songs from the full length, but they are under our old name The Riot Squad as it was right before the name change. This is a co-label sampler with Street Anthem Records USA, Rebellion Records Holland, and Bandworm Records Germany. Other killer bands on the album are Dirty Water, Joe Coffee, Vogelfrei, Hardsell, etc. 25 songs for $5 in the US and in Europe. Get it!

Any future releases planned?
Well, we're about to go into the studio to record six brand new songs for a split CD with Reno Divorce from Denver, Colorado. You gotta check them out! They are one of my favorite bands right now and have this incredible Social D sound going on! The CD is gonna be released by Street Anthem in the USA and Boss Tuneage in Europe. The songs are the best ones we ever wrote and are hopefully gonna get Sweet Poison's name out to everyone.

Any last words, shout-outs, statements, etc.?
Thanks for the interview, special shout-out to Bruno and Jason at Street Anthem records, those guys are doing an amazing job! Check www.streetanthemrecords.com for further info! Thanks to Bouncing Sole Records, Rebellion records and you for reading this one! ↖

OPPOSITION OF ONE



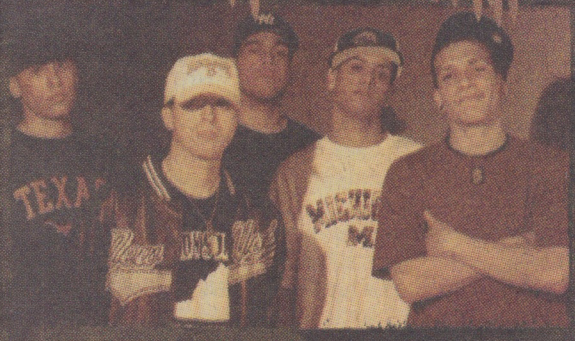
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THE ZIMMERMANN NOTE



By Kirby Unrest / Photography By Maggie Davenport

If you wouldn't mind, could you give our readers a little background history on the band?
Travis: The band was formed in 2003 by Carey, Damian and Jordan. After several line-up changes, Joe and I joined up. Damian was in Commit Suicide and I have another project, The Caulfield Principle, so at the time this band wasn't our primary focus. Since then Commit Suicide has broken up and we started focusing on doing something with this band. We're all fans of older European metal and wanted to do something along those lines without getting grouped in with the newer wave of At The Gates clones. Most of us also have a background in hardcore and wanted to try to fit in somehow to that community without being labeled metalcore. We're also huge death and tech metal fans and Damian has such an affinity to writing that kind of material, so we like to throw in quirky, crazy-ass tech parts. We're always trying to balance all the influences so one doesn't take over completely. I think we've done well to create a refreshing, consistent sound.

Where does the band name come from and why did you choose it?
Travis: The Zimmermann note was a communication sent from a German officer to Mexico during World War I. The note was trying to incite violence against the United States to keep us occupied so Germany could win the war in Europe. British intelligence intercepted the note and gave it to the States. This was one of the factors that brought us into the war that inexorably gave Hitler the opportunity to come to power and start a sequence of events including World War II, the Cold War, Korea and Vietnam. Just about every important historical event in the 20th Century can be traced back to this note. This is a fourth and fifth generation band. We've all been around the block and we keep on pushing because we love playing music. That's what a soldier does, he keeps pushing on. So, we use a lot of old wartime poster themes in our artwork.

As a band that draws from hardcore, metal, and punk influences, what are your thoughts on the consistent musical divisions and subgenres within the scene?
Jordan: I think that we should concern less on the clothes and haircut and more on the music and the message.
Travis: As an active part of the local hardcore scene, I see a lot of disconcerting things happening in underground music. We've got bands changing their look and sound overnight in order to get in on the current trend in metal. We see a lot more people at the touring national acts' shows, but we're not seeing these new kids at our local shows, supporting the smaller touring bands' who actually need the support. I'm sick of songs about girls. There was a time when you could go to a hardcore show and every band would have something to say. It's troubling that this has changed. And this isn't in just the hardcore scene. You see the pollution of mainstream corruption everywhere in underground music. It's sickening.

Jordan, I noticed you're sponsored by some pretty big names in the drum world, including Remo. How did those endorsements come about?
Jordan: It first happened with my stick sponsor "Silverfox Sticks." I bought a pair of their sticks and I liked them more than any sticks that I've ever bought. So went to the website to see the manufacturing details and they had a list of their endorsers next to the details page. I called Silverfox and asked them if they were accepting endorsers and how I could be one. They told me to send a media kit to them and they would contact me if they were into it. After being sponsored by Silverfox for a year I also received sponsorship buy their parent company Grover Drums. And the story just keeps going.

Pittsburgh has always been an epicenter for the hardcore/metal scene. How have things been going there as of late and are there any up and coming bands you think kids should know about?
Travis: Pittsburgh is a great place for underground music. We've got lots of talent that never gets recognized because they either break up, have too much financial difficulty or other obligations which prevent them from pursuing music full-time. It's the Pittsburgh curse. It happened to Commit Suicide and Better Off Dead, Jordan's old band. We won't let that happen to us again. As for bands to look out for, everyone should check out our friends Shallow Water Grave and One Dead Three Wounded. We're probably going to do something with Shallow Water Grave in the future, so keep your eyes open. I also want to say there are some great Pittsburgh bands you should all check out: Clearview, Lionheart, Die Screaming, Circle of Dead Children, Built Upon Frustration and Suffer the Fate. If you are near

Pittsburgh and you see any of these bands playing, check them out.

What are some of the meanings behind your lyrics?
Travis: Don't take anything at face value. Question everything. Don't let trends or so-called friends change your identity. Friends who wouldn't take a hit for you aren't friends at all. Live life to its fullest, cut away anything that doesn't make sense. That just about sums up the content of our songs. I'm not going to give you a lengthy lecture about my lyrics because I hate when people do that. I try to write lyrics that deal with friendship and social and political issues. I rarely deviate from one of the three.

How goes the label search?
Travis: We are very happy with what Innerstrength Records is doing for us. We don't have any plans to be moving around just yet. We'll just see what the future brings.

What do you hope to accomplish with this band?
Travis: We want to be able to do this full-time without having to worry about scrounging up gas money to make it to the next show, but we don't want to be Ozzfest big. We're looking for a nice, cozy place in the middle. In the immortal words of Twisted Sister, "I wanna rock!"

With the name coming from a historical root, is the band as a whole/individually very interested in history? If so, whom do you feel are the most fascinating figures or the greatest events?
Travis: Carey and I are huge history buffs. We're particularly interested in the world wars. But if I had to choose the greatest historical figure I'd say Socrates. His ideas empowered the earliest philosophers. He provided the earliest foundations for logic. We need to question everything and remove ourselves from illogical nonsense. How can we do that if we have no concept of logic?
Carey: I have always had a liking for history. World wars are very intriguing to me as far as the reasons for it, the propaganda, how things developed but, I think I am most fascinated with the things that are invented which are used to kill each other. War is the ultimate disagreement and since I don't disagree with people that strongly it just gives me a sense of wonderment as to what would motivate people to go to such extremes. Perhaps it's more of a sociological thing rather than straight up history.

Do you stand for anything politically/socially/personally (i.e. veganism, straight edge, liberal/conservative policies, anti-(fill in the blank)?
Jordan: I'm personally really into Animal rights, I've been a vegetarian for seven years and counting. I'm also really into politics local and national. I've attended many of the anti-war and anti-Bush actions over the years. I just try to stay up to date and conscious about the things happening around me.
Travis: Carey and I are straight edge and have been for years now. Jordan is vegetarian. Some of us are Christian, some of us are not. We all see politics, spirituality and life differently, but we don't let it interfere with our band or our friendship. Politics have become the new form of prejudice and it's horrible that America has deteriorated into partisan squabbling. It's ruining our country and we, as a band, all recognize that. As for what we as a band stand for, we are just here to play the best music we can and have as much fun with it as we can.
Carey: I totally agree with Travis as far as letting beliefs ruin relationships with people. We shouldn't be so quick to judge one another. I have met so many great friends whom don't agree with me politically, spiritually or philosophically. I guess that's fine if you want to cut yourself off from certain people, because we are all given the will to live how we want to live. However, I feel that I have led a more fulfilling life by being friends with people from all walks of life. It has only served to strengthen my beliefs.

What's up next for the Zimmerman Note? Are you planning on recording a full length anytime soon?
Travis: We are in the process of writing for a full length, but as picky as we have been getting about our material it may be another year and a half before we get to recording. We'd probably want to do a 12-14 song album. I hate it when you pay absurd prices for an album and get 9-10 songs. Bands are getting lazy.







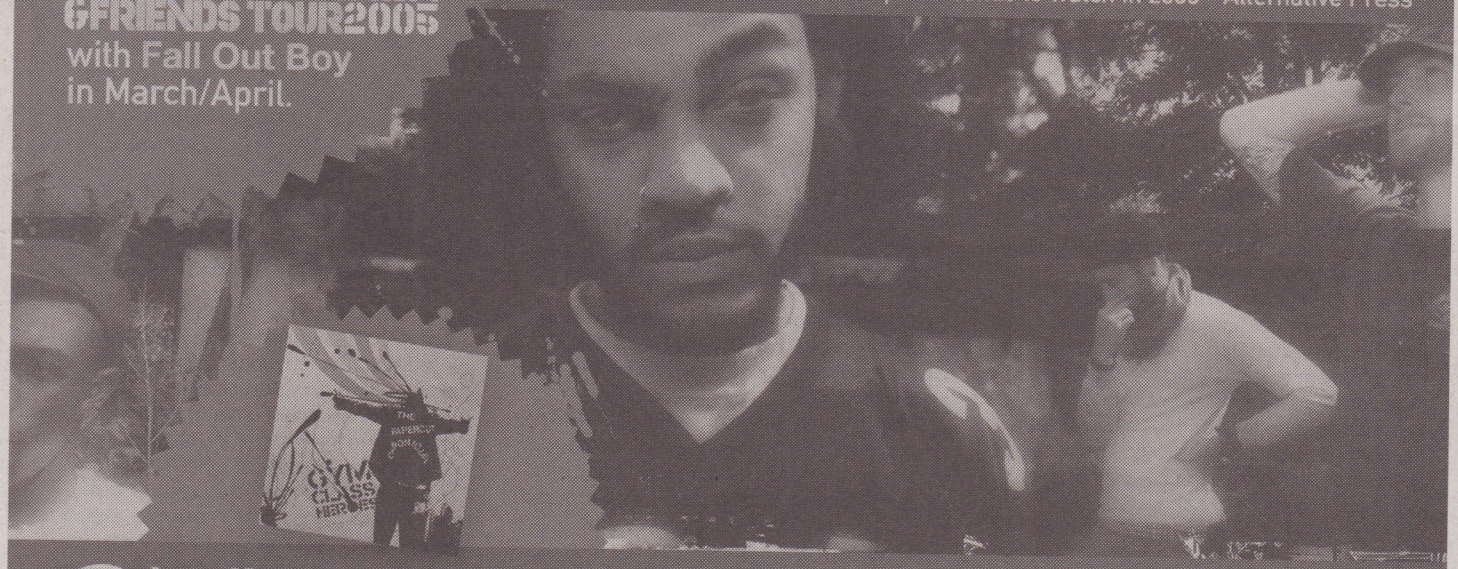
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Senses Fail



An Interview With Vocalist Buddy Nielsen

By Tristan Staddon

You guys are back from Europe after spending a few weeks there on the Vagrant Europe tour. Tell me about the tour and the couple of weeks over there.
It was really cool, just being over there and seeing things I've never seen before. And at first, I didn't think it was going to go very well at all. I get really bad anxiety and I was having these anxiety attacks and just getting scared and freaking out about the whole thing. So, you can imagine, being over there in different cities I don't know, where people don't necessarily speak the same language, it was terrifying. I was like, 'that's it – I'm going home!' But, luckily it ended up being awesome, doing stuff I wondered if I'd ever do.

I've read that you've suffered from these anxiety attacks and periods of self-doubt in the past.
Oh yeah, a lot of that.

It seems like you're very difficult on yourself; your own toughest critic. What was it that set that off this time?
Well, we had been on tour for a long time before going over to Europe. And not long before I left, it was like a week before, my grandmother died. So, it was the kind of thing where I wanted to be home, but I had to go. It's always hard to move away from the people you love, but this was just extra hard. I didn't know how much it was going to change my life or anything. So it was something I just tried not to deal with, but I had to deal with it. So even though it was only a week before, I had to get on a plane and just deal with it somehow.

Well, certainly my sympathies go out to you. That's even more tough when you don't enough have the chance to grieve for a proper amount of time.
Yeah, that's the thing. I didn't really have





the opportunity to grieve at all in that situation, I just had to get up and go over to that other part of the world. That really sucked for a while because you can't do that when you've got to be moving around and getting ready and then playing and all of that. So it was hard, but fortunately the guys were all great and helped me keep it together and get over it.

To focus a little bit on the more positive aspects of this tour, tell me about some of the good things that you saw overseas. How are European audiences that were probably seeing you for the first time different than those in the States?
Some of the European audiences that didn't know English seemed sort of standoff-ish. I don't know what it was because with FATA (From Autumn To Ashes) headlining, they seemed to know those songs. But they just sort of stood there and watched us, so it was sort of weird. And in the UK, they're a lot like American audiences, I guess.

For someone like yourself, to go abroad and see things you've never seen, I'd think that would open up some interesting perspectives for you. Tell me about what you learned.
Well, I'm an American, so there was that to overcome. I'd run into people or worry about seeming obnoxious, and say, 'hey, I voted for Kerry. Leave me out of this.' But it was mostly good that way. We spent some time in Italy that was awesome, and in Amsterdam – well, it's Amsterdam, so that was really great.

All this touring is, of course, on the heels of the release of Let It Enfold You, your new album. It's debuted to huge reception everywhere – 25,000 copies in its first week – and it's building an incredible buzz around you guys. Aside from getting asked to a lot more proms, what are the biggest changes to your life after the release of this record?
We don't really get that much of that. You know, it's great to see it's doing well and we're doing well enough, but we're not doing great yet. Certainly we've received a lot more press, and it's exciting to be able to go out and pour our hearts out every night, but we're not getting rich here. We're just going to keep touring and try to continue being ourselves.

Having these tours under your belt with this record and the EP, you've been working this record and these ideas for almost two years now. Do you get to the point where you just want to start and thinking and talking about new things?
Well, yeah, but I still think about what I could've done on this record every day. There are so many other things I want to do, and wanted to do, that I still think about how every part could be improved and then we try and do that when we play. That's how we work – the label was like, "this fucking sucks," and we were like, "we don't think this sucks, these are our songs, and we're not fucking changing them." The time will come for us to go in and record again and write new things, but we only get caught up in recording when you're on the road and vice versa. But right now, I'm still getting new shades of understanding about myself and what I wrote back then. It takes a while for you to really understand yourself, and for me to understand the things I've written, so we just want to keep working on this.

There's a lot of emphasis in the music on the lyrics and they're clearly very important to you, so tell me more about what you're learning from these new shades of understanding.
There are a lot of things. Looking back, I'm not sure I ever really knew the kind of guy I am. You know, a lot of things I've written – be it about myself, others, or anything - it can take on different meanings and forms when you step away from it a bit. I often write things from the point of view about a relationship, and when you look back on them a long time after, it can look different, and from that I learn about myself. About my own tendencies and what I've learned, or other people and things about myself and them. That kind of stuff can be hard to focus on at times, but when I can, that's what I take from it.

Being so critical of your own work, are there elements of the writing now that you wish you had done differently?
Oh, yeah, of course. There are always things you know you could improve on, but that's the way you feel at that point in your life. You can think about it a million times, but if you don't have it all figured out, you just go with it. I did my best to express the kinds of things I was feeling and be honest about it. Sure I think other things some times, but that's how it was then and we're all really happy with it.

Yeah, and that kind of honesty, as you can probably attest, makes it all the more rewarding in the end.
Oh, yeah! I mean, I need to make my lyrics and everything like that, because otherwise I couldn't do it. I'd just get too upset. This way it's all out there and I, or any of us, have no problem standing behind it.

You made this record with Steve Evetts (Dillinger Escape Plan, Saves The Day).

To me, it seems like there's a very cinematic quality to a lot the songs. Almost as though it's really a series of scenes from a movie, not an album. Is that something you were consciously aware of during the recording?
Wow, really? You know, I've never heard anyone say that before. Cinematic... I don't really even know what to say to that, other than it's different and sounds good. It's definitely a new one, so no, it wasn't something we were consciously thinking about when we were writing or recording, I guess. Cool...

The studio you recorded in, it was actually located beside some sort of Russian Mob-run strip club?
Yeah, it was this Russian strip club and sometimes we'd go over there in the day when we were done working or whatever. But it was never crazy or anything – it's not like there were girls everywhere, because it was usually in the afternoon that we'd be there.

And the age thing probably didn't help.
Yeah, yeah. But I'm almost there.

Your birthday's in February?
Yeah!

So right now February's shaping up to be a pretty big month for you guys.
Yeah, I know. We go out on the Taste of Chaos, and this press, and my birthday. It's going to be big, I guess.

Now, something else I want to talk about, Buddy, surrounds your interest in religion – specifically Hinduism and the belief that to achieve Nirvana you've got to...
The thing about that is I dabble in religions – a lot of them – and I don't know everything, but I like to because I'm interested. So the name comes from the belief about dying and in achieving Nirvana you have to give up everything and that stuff. Is that what you were going to ask me?

Well, no, actually (laughs). I figured you're sick of answering that question, so let's take it somewhere else. As your success grows, and your style of living grows perhaps a little more comfortable, does it become harder to separate from your attachment to things?
Well, not really, I guess. I mean, we all know where we came from and that we're doing better and getting along, but it's never been about those kinds of things. We're not in this for the money and the rock star thing and the TV stuff. We're just not in it for that. So maybe we are living a little more comfortably, but we don't even have cars yet – well, we have cars but we aren't buying them. Seeing people through growing up, and from my mom (Emmy-winning soap actress Lisa Brown), and being around that environment, I sort of know what can happen to people. We just want to stay together and be happy because it's never been about any of those other things for us.

A big part of your personal happiness, but surely a disappointment to a lot of girls, is that you have a girlfriend.



That's right! I do, yeah.

Spending so much time on the road, and overseas, and seeing as how you guys have built up a reputation as pretty heavy partiers, how do she and you respond to the distance and all of the ridiculous stories that come along with that?
That's the worst part about all of this, for sure. Fucking being apart and having all this other shit come along with it. Being far away and having to work is one thing, but to have to deal with people making up total lies about you and getting it spread all around the Internet is something I admit I was not totally prepared for. Everyone just writes whatever shit they want and doesn't realize or care that it affects people. It's like, 'fuck decency – let's just do whatever we want.' Like, where does it all come from? Where does it all happen? You know, I'll call my girlfriend and she'll have heard all this shit about someone I supposedly hooked up with and all of that. Like, why does that happen? I remember when I used to go to shows and see bands, I didn't know anything about them. I had no idea – didn't know what was going on. I didn't know who they were, or where they came from or any of that. I don't understand the idea now where kids want your autograph. What does that even mean to someone? I never wanted stuff like that, and I just don't understand where it comes from. I was more focused on the music and what it meant to me than any of this other stuff. I love meeting fans and saying hi and that stuff, but now it's to the point where if we're playing a show, I can't walk down the street with a girl without worrying that someone's going to write about it on a messageboard. It's crazy... I just don't know, but I'm really put off by it. If you care that much, just listen to the music. Maybe it's because I wasn't like that. I wouldn't try to meet bands even, and if I did, I'd say that they were cool or great or whatever, and that was it. It's weird.

I understand where you're coming from, but since you guys are from New Jersey, one of the homes of this style of music, and the personal nature of the songwriting has to play into that as well. Do you think that's a factor – that because your feelings and emotions go into the music, kids feel like they know you somehow?
Yeah, but not crazy like this can be. I mean, it's fucking awesome that people can relate to the music and feel things that I hope it makes, but sometimes these kids take it to a whole different level. The Internet needs to come with some sort of understanding, because people believe absolutely everything they read on there. If they hear it on TV or the radio, they're skeptical but just because they read it on the Internet, they think it's true. That's why I hate this whole MySpace thing.

But you guys had an account, didn't you?
Somebody made that for us! We didn't even ask them to, and they just went out and did it. I mean, honestly, that's awesome for who did it that they love us that much, but then anybody can say anything they want to say on there. That part's ridiculous, because then when people read it, they just believe it's the truth. Two of the guys in our band don't even party at all! And the rest of us aren't even close to what some people say we're like. Whatever, it's fucked up and I hate it. It's a lot different than when I was getting into bands and stuff. And it's too bad for our real fans who are honest that they can't use it anymore, since we took it down.

Agreed. It's sad that that's the point we've reached and that those things need to happen.
Right. We're not here to set the scene on fire or be everything for you, we're just a band; a bunch of guys writing songs about things they care about. It's too bad that just because we're getting a little more exposure, that's what comes along with it. But we're not Yellowcard – we're not selling a million records. We've always done things ourselves, and we're going to keep doing things ourselves, and that's it.

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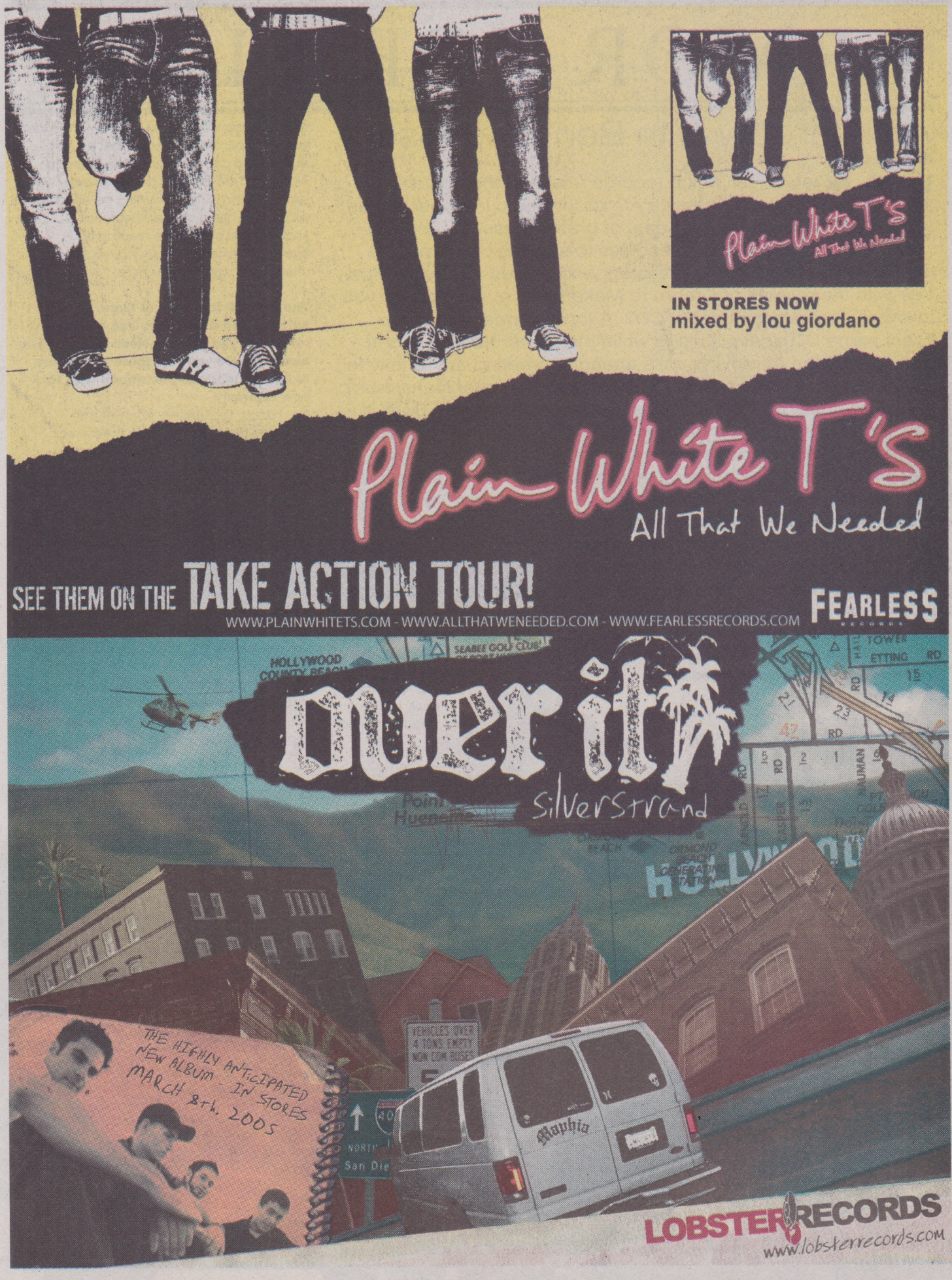
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ARMOR FOR SLEEP

An Interview with Ben Jorgensen

By Matt Cote

When Equal Vision records released the debut CD from New Jersey's Armor for Sleep last year, it was met with a great deal of press, pressure, and of course, hype. Needless to say, the band met the expectations, handled the pressure, and proved the hype to be true with the release of Dream to Make Believe. So how do you follow up a successful debut CD? A lot of bands put out the exact same CD again, striking while the proverbial iron is hot, putting the idea of moving units ahead of creating art. Lucky for us, Armor for Sleep care more about creating meaningful music and passionate art than the latest SoundScan results. Sure, if everyone decides that their new CD, the soon-to-be-released What To Do When You're Dead, is pure gold and it sells well, that will be the icing on the cake for this band. But if everyone hates it, that's ok too – they're happy with their effort, and they'll put out another CD that they hope you hate less. And another one after that. And another one after that. You get the point – these guys aren't just here doing what is popular, they're here doing what love and hope that you might feel the same way too.

Your first CD, Dream to Make Believe, has been out for just over a year and a half. How have your lives changed since that came out?

Not much. I think for the most part, before Dream to Make Believe, we hadn't really been out on the road, we weren't really a real band. But now, after Dream to Make Believe came out, even though we didn't really have the biggest impact we were aware that, on the music industry, and I think we like that, but we impacted the people that bought our CD and come to our shows and sing along, and we just take ourselves a lot more seriously. So going into writing the second record, we had a different perspective knowing that people are reacting and listening to what you're saying, you kinda change the way that you write.

The first CD had a lot of hype surrounding it before it was even released, and was received well by your audience. Do you feel there's pressure to live up to the expectations with this new release?

No, I don't. I mean, we don't let the pressure get to us. There is pressure, a lot of people are expecting a lot from our second CD, but if anything we're just more confident because more people are looking at us now, that just pumps us up, it doesn't psyche us out, you know? It just makes us want to be our best and prove the people wrong who don't think that we're anything good.

So what's harder – writing the first CD, or writing the follow up?

Um, I guess writing the follow up is harder. When you're writing a first CD, you're just introducing yourselves and really hoping that people just like you. But for the second CD, not only do you hope other people will understand what's going on, but you also





have to appeal to the people who liked the first CD, and you don't want to let them down, you know? I don't care if whatever scenester doesn't like our CD, but if there's someone who likes our first CD and we let them down, then I'll feel responsible for that. But, I mean, that's really just an after thought. When we write songs, it's really our own kind of sacred place and we don't let anything enter that world of ours.

So the new CD is called What To Do When You're Dead. How would you personally compare and contrast this release to the last?

I think...I think it's a lot better than our first CD. I think our first CD was good in that...I mean, I think it's a genuinely good CD and I'm happy with the songs, but first of all, Armor For Sleep wasn't really Armor For Sleep when we made the first CD. It was basically me and Anthony, the bass player. After we recorded that, we got both Nash and PJ to play drums and guitar, and they're a huge part of the writing process now. But I think our songs have changed, the way we go about songwriting has changed. I think with our second album we really thought for months and months about it and planned out what we wanted it to be like, and we had an amazing producer like Machine who really saw a vision through to the end. I think Dream To Make Believe is a collection of songs, but this is really like a thought out album that we spent a lot of time on.

To me, it sounds like Armor For Sleep, but at the same time, there's no song that I hear and think 'that sounds just like the last CD,' which is usually a good thing as it shows progress and a new sound. Do you feel as though that is true?

Yeah, I do. I think we didn't listen to the old CD much when we were writing the new record, and we're in completely different places in our lives now, you know? During Dream to Make Believe, I was kind of in this weird state. I had just got out of college, and I hadn't been on tour. But writing this second CD, we've been touring every single month, and we're just in a completely different mindset. So I think the songs came out differently to reflect who we are now.

Is moving forward, musically and lyrically, something you work at or just the natural progress of the band?

Um, I think it's a little bit of both. I think naturally we'll write something and it'll feel completely fine to us, but then we'll be like 'Wow, where did that come from? That's a step up.' And then sometimes, with the new CD, in the studio, we were like, 'Well, we should try this, we've never done it' and it ends up being cool, so it's a little bit of both, you know?

Did you approach the writing of this any differently, now that you have some experience under your belt?

Well, the writing was a little different because the first time with Dream To Make Believe, I was basically writing whole songs in my room and just bringing them to practice, and then we went to the studio with the song pretty much like I had written it. And this one was kind of a more free-flow experience. I just basically brought in a skeleton and we'd all jam out on a song until it just felt right. I think it was less restrictive, and more stress-free than writing Dream To Make Believe.

And how about recording – was it easier this time, since you have already had this experience, or was it harder now that you knew what to expect?

"I think artwork is more than just something so that it'll look cool on the shelf, it tells a whole story and that's really what we're trying to do...and give the people who buy our records something special,"

I love being in the recording studio. I don't view it as hard – I think each time you record, you gain more experience, and you learn more about the process of it and you just have more tools to go along with it. So this time, it wasn't more stressful, it was actually much easier. Because once you know how the whole monster works, you're able to make it work for you a little better, you know? Because I mean, recording is just like using these weird machines and computers to make your ideas come out. And if you understand it more, you can manipulate them more to see your vision out to the end. So I think we're just getting better and better at that.

You seem to have incorporated a few new sounds into the music, for instance the beats on a track like Basement Ghost Singing. How did that come about?
Yeah, we were just more open minded. For that song, Machine our producer, he was really into electronics, and that was something that, hadn't ever used before, but we just felt like it fight the mood of certain songs, because of that weird fake sound, kind of creepy and weird, you know?

The artwork for the last release was somewhat minimalist, keeping things very neat and clean. How does the new artwork compare to the previous?
Well the new artwork was actually, before we even recorded the album or went into production, I came up with the artwork in my head, and it was really specific to this one image. We talked to a bunch of different artists to see if we could get it right, and people were kind of falling short of what I thought about. And then we went to Astrix Studios, and I told them my idea, and in the first round they basically nailed exactly what I wanted. You know what I mean? The first artwork, I don't feel really had that much relevance to the songs. It was more of a mood thing. But this one pretty much goes along with the whole story of the CD, which is cool, because I'm really excited about the whole product.

You kind of just touched on this, but I'll ask it anyway. Some people seem to think the artwork for a release is just a way to package it, but some use it as part of the release itself – helping to bring the songs together, kind of creating an aesthetic or scene. How important do you guys feel it is to create quality packaging?
I think that's really important. I think I slaved over the artwork just as much as I slaved over the recording to make sure it was perfect. I think artwork is more than just something so that it'll look cool on the shelf, it tells a whole story and that's really what we're trying to do, is tell and entire story, and give the people who buy our records something special, you know? Something more than they can just play in the background, we want it to kind of consume people. And you know, one of the bonuses about releasing CDs is you get artwork that comes with it, it's not just a little CD that you're going to put into your CD player, there's all this other stuff that you can put in, booklets and whatever, and if that's gonna help us complete this image of the CD. That's great, and I think that's always going to be really important to us.

How has your relationship with Equal Vision been throughout your career?
Equal Vision has been the most important entity to our band. They have been, since the beginning, supportive of us and only want the best for us, and I really love those guys so much, and they've been nothing short of amazing with us. But I think that with this new CD, they're really working their asses off for it, and it's great. I have no worries now because I know those guys are working really hard to see this record through.

So every band that is good is from New Jersey. What is it about the state that breeds musicians?
I don't know, it's weird, it's just really bizarre. I grew up, going to shows, and I was in a band in High School called Random Task, and I remember in high school going to see bands like Thursday, and Saves the Day, and Lifetime. I guess bands in New Jersey, it all starts because there's this saying about not being a rock star when you're from New Jersey, and this scene was kind of started on this DIY basis. I was a really big fan of Thursday, so I went up to their singer, Geoff, and talked to him, and Geoff and I became friends because of that since high school, which is really cool because I still look up to Geoff so much. Just from that, I started hanging out with a ton of people, like Alex from Eyeball Records, and this kid Mikey, and a few years later I was starting another band, which became Armor For Sleep, and I asked Mikey Way in to start it, and he was like, 'oh, I'm sorry, I can't, I'm starting another band with my older brother,' and that band became My Chemical Romance, so I don't know. It's just like everyone in New Jersey is friends with each other, and there's no real attitude between any of the bands, and everyone just loves to help everyone out, and it's just like some weird movie how everything works out.

What are the tour plans for support of the new CD?
We're going out in February for a long time. From February to April, I think. In February, we're going out with Something Corporate and Straylight Run, and then after that we're doing a co-headling tour with Recover, and we're brining this amazing new band out with us called Say Anything, and we're really excited about that. Their record is one of the best records that came out in 2004. So we're really excited about those tours.

Is touring something that everyone in the band enjoys?
Yeah, I think in the beginning it freaks you out. It's a shock to your system, to be in random cities each night, but now we all call each other and we're like, 'when are we going back on tour?', you know? After a while, from abandoning your hometown and all your friends, you're kind of losing what you have, when you get home from tour, you really have nothing anymore. Your life becomes road, because that's all you have. So that's kind of us now, being home isn't really like being home because it's not our home anymore.

What have been some of your favorite bands to tour with?
We've toured with so many great bands, but I still think Recover is one of the best bands we've toured with, so I'm really excited to get out and tour with them again. We toured with this band called Emanuel, who are coming out with a CD now, who I think are fucking amazing. We toured with Thursday once, for Plea for Peace, and that was amazing.

So what should everyone expect from Armor for Sleep in the new year?
I dunno. Expect the record to come out in February, and expect us to be on tour in your town and expect us to play the new stuff for you. But I dunno, we'll see what happens. I hope everyone likes the new CD, but if nobody likes it, we'll make another one, and then another one after that. We're kind of just keeping our heads down and going forward. In the beginning, it's really easy to not let the pressure to get you, and try to think that you want a billion people to like you and you want this huge record deal, but we're just excited to make records that we want to make and put them out, so we're just going to keep doing it.

For tour dates and updated information on WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'RE DEAD, visit www.armorforsleep.com.

STRYCHNINE



By Janelle Jones

At the tail-end of 2004, Oakland's reigning hardcore punk kings Strychnine celebrated their tenth year of existence (no easy feat, to be sure!), and released the 13-track brazen blast 'Born in a Bar' on TKO Records. Bassist Joe Fucko, vocalist Jimi Haze, and drummer Markley Hart (missing in action were guitarists Brian Hood and Idon Bryant) waxed philosophical on the finer things in life, namely mullets and that divine mind-altering substance absinthe. Also touched upon were the band's (mis)adventures with pyrotechnics and some details about their latest release.

Do you have any touring plans in the works for 2005?
Jimi: Well... [Laughs] Not really right now, but we're thinking about doing the East Coast probably in the summer and then probably coming back and doing some West Coast stuff, we're skipping Europe this year.

When you guys were in Europe, have you ever had absinthe?
Joe: Yeah. [Laughter]
Markley: I brought back two bottles the time before last and I was holding on to one for our guitar player and it got broken at a party.

[Disappointed] Oh...
Markley: We've had our share of absinthe.
Joe: I got thrown out of a brothel on absinthe after I lost the rest of the band and I wandered into the red light district of Bremen [Germany].

[Laughs] I don't know. I'm just obsessed with it and have to ask people if they've had it.
Jimi: Yeah, it's delicious.

You've been around 10 years! So, Jimi and Markley, you're the only original members?
Jimi: Yeah, me and Markley are the two originals left, but Joe's been in the band for eight years now.
Joe: I'm the new original. [Laughter]

But overall, 10 years.
Jimi: Actually we got together in '94, I don't know, 'cause it's so close to '95, we just said '95.
Markley: I actually think it's last month 10 years.
Jimi: Ten years is a long time to remember!

Yeah, all that absinthe... [Laughter all around]
Joe: Classic.

What's writing and playing music all about for you now?
Jimi: Joe...?
Joe: Uh, fun. [Laughs]

Same as always?
Jimi: Same as always.
Joe: I think, I don't know, some of us if we didn't play music our heads would implode or something. We'd be getting in a lot more trouble than we get into right now.

But over the years, how have things changed, I mean musically, obviously the attitude's the same...
Joe: I think as a band we've kind of matured more. We work on the songs a lot more than we used to. We really take our time trying to make a song as good as it possibly can be, I guess, rather than just throwing out four chords and playing them over and over to a really fast drum beat and screaming.
Markley: We're not afraid to have keyboards and congas...
[Laughter]
Joe: And morroccas...
Jimi: ...Anymore. That's the growing up part, I guess.

So this record, it recently came out or what?
Jimi: I think it's been out for three or four weeks now. But we tried to get it done in time to take it to Europe with us, but that didn't happen. I guess Mark [TKO owner] moving from Virginia to Los Angeles somehow he shut down, so we didn't get our record in time for the tour.
Joe: Well, we had the vinyl for the European tour because the vinyl came out on...
Markley: ...Depth Charge Records.
Joe: And TKO was just putting out the CD. The CD didn't actually get released until recently.

All right. Here my ignorance will show through, but there's a lot of references in the liner notes to "the mullet." [Laughter] I can kind of piece it together... Jimi, did you have one?
Jimi: Yeah, I had it.

Okay, and people couldn't deal with it?! [Laughs]
Jimi: Oh, people couldn't deal with it. The best we got dealt with all right was from people in truck stops, but punks couldn't deal with it. You get onstage, turn around, and be like, "What? You guys never seen somebody with a mullet?" We'd start the set and they'd talk to those guys and say, "We thought he was just the roadie or the driver or something."





Joe: Yeah, we would show up at shows and Jimi does most of the driving when we're touring the States and so we all get out of the van with charged hair and spiked-leather jackets and here comes Jimi with this big, curly, bleached-blond mullet. [Laughter] I think a lot of people just thought that he was our driver/bodyguard/roadie. [Laughs]
Jimi: I decided I wanted to do it just for fun, so I got people to bid to cut it and I ended up getting like 50 bucks and a bottle of Jim Beam. My roommate actually won the bidding war.
Joe: But the whole mullet thing, one of the songs, "Hate Finger," is about how the punk-rock scene is supposed to be such an open scene to everyone, but apparently if you have a mullet it's not really open to you. We were at a party – where, in Boston? These guys from another band came and introduced themselves to us and we were all sitting on a couch and Jimi was sitting in between me and I think the guitar player and they would come and introduce themselves to me and then they'd kinda look at Jimi and sorta skip over him and then introduce themselves to the guitar player.
Jimi: Yeah, one of the bands you'd probably know but we shouldn't mention... [Laughter]

Okay. [Laughs] Leave that unsaid... But you're right – it's almost like a little experiment...
Jimi: Social studies.
Joe: A little anthropology going on there.
Jimi: It's kinda my personality, you know?
Joe: It was basically meant just to be a joke.
Jimi: And the joke was on me, apparently!
Joe: Some people took the joke a little too seriously.
Jimi: I got a lot of wrestling questions.

Oh yeah?! [Laughs]
Jimi: Tons of them.
Joe: We played Gilman Street and these guys have their own backyard-wrestling thing and they kept trying to get Jimi to go to their backyard the following day or the next couple days so they could wrestle.

Also, another song, "No Vyktum, No Crime", it says it's based on someone who sent you the basis for the lyrics, do you know this person or it was just someone who...
Jimi: Yeah, he was actually a guy I grew up with. I've known him for almost 20 years now, and he got put in the federal penitentiary. He got busted in North Carolina and he ended up doing almost four-and-a-half years for dealing marijuana.
Joe: He's the guy that actually wrote the lyrics and he sent them to us, and we wrote the music around the lyrics.

Right. So is that something you guys always do: put explanations along with the lyrics?
Jimi: No, that was the first time. I have a feeling it won't be the last because I write lyrics that aren't exactly clear all the time.
Joe: Maybe it's another maturity thing.
Jimi: It might be!

Basically, what are your thoughts on this record? You said you guys approached it in a more mature way.
Joe: [Contentedly] I think it's a fine slab of wax.
Jimi: Overall I think we're all really proud of it; it came out really good. And Bart Thurber, the guy who recorded it and mixed it all, he had a good feel for it, and that helped us out tremendously – when you have somebody who's into what you're doing.
Markley: And he was cheap so we could spend more time in the studio. [Laughs]
Jimi: And get more beer.

I've never been over on the West Coast, but do you think where you're from has affected your sound and attitude?
Joe: Totally. I think a lot of the music we write kinda reflects a lot of the music we listened to when we were growing up, you know, the kind of music we would like to listen to is hopefully the kind of music we're writing. Me, being from California and always having lived [here], I grew up listening to a lot of California hardcore punk bands, so I think it kinda sorta seeps out either intentionally or unintentionally. We don't have any control over it.

What about the part you're from, Oakland?
Joe: It's a beautiful city.

[Laughter all around] Help the tourism, yes!
Joe: I love it. This place is fuckin' awesome.

But I mean are there different styles coming from different areas?
Markley: There's just about every kind of style in the Bay area.
Jimi: Yeah, you can go to a crust show and see a punk band and a pop-punk band on the same bill. It's kinda strange like that.
Joe: It's not a very large city. I mean, the towns surrounding Oakland are larger. Oakland itself isn't really big, so as far as bands are concerned, some shows are just genre-based like all thrash-core kind of bands and then other emo kind of bands and whatnot. But there's often a mix of all these bands 'cause there's not a whole lot of places to play in Oakland, so you can get a good mix of different kinds of music in one night.
Jimi: That makes sense.

I think so...! What do you want people to know about Strychnine?
Joe: Uh, that we're cool... [Laughter] And if they see us, they should buy us beers and things. [Laughter]

Anything else? [Laughs]
Joe: Uh uh.
Jimi: I don't know. I guess just, you know, we're really into old-school punk rock and we love punk rock so much we can't stop playing it.
Joe: No matter how many people want us to stop...
Jimi: It doesn't matter! We're not going to. [Laughs] Boo and throw rocks all you want.

What about what happened with Dimebag Darrell, the guitarist? What was the first thing that came to mind when you heard that that happened at the show?
Jimi: The world's fuckin' psycho.
Markley: I thought Dimebag must've been fucking his girlfriend or something.
Joe: I think it's pretty shitty that people go to shows to have a good time, to listen to music, to have fun, and socialize and whatnot, and you got some fuckin' nutbag that fuckin' shows up that has some gripe figured out in his head. I mean, how you gonna go and just



kill someone?! What, dude? That don't fuckin' make no sense. That's totally lame. I don't know what kind of club he was playing at, but I don't think it was a huge stadium kinda place... That just kinda makes me think you know, hell, what if some sorta nutjob showed up at one of our shows? It's not entirely impossible.
Markley: And ran out of rocks. [Laughter] ...I heard the guy was a Marine, trained to kill, you know, pick out the enemy. That's what I was thinking of...
Joe: It's kinda weird. Musicians, regardless of whether you really, really hate this person's music, that hate isn't any kind of reason to kill someone. Music's supposed to make people fuckin' happy or whatever, forget about all the fucked-up things that are going on. I can understand if someone wanted to go and shoot the president or something like that. It would make more sense than shooting Dimebag Darrell.

Just don't listen to the music...
Joe: They're not forcing you to go to the show! [Laughter] I wonder if he did pay too.
Jimi: He probably did. Paid 10 bucks to go shoot someone.

Well, then security's gonna be heightened.
Markley: Metal detectors at shows.
Joe: It's kind of the same thing when Great White lit that place up from their pyrotechnics. We used to do pyrotechnics. Markley made homemade pyrotechnics, so we would blow stuff up at shows. It was kinda fun like being at a Judas Priest concert in '85 or something like that. You can't do that shit anymore because venues aren't having it. Yeah, I can totally see how something like that might definitely change the course of security at shows now.

Wait, are you kidding about the pyrotechnics?!
Joe: No. He made 'em right in our house, he used to try 'em out in the living room and blow all the circuits out in the fuckin' house. [Laughs] One time, we played a show and he put all these little metal shards in the pyros. He thought it would make all this sparkly stuff after it blew up and it would come down. [Laughter] You set it off and one of the shards implanted itself like an inch away from one of our friend's eyes.

[Laughs] Oh no!
Jimi: He liked it.
Markley: He was on the balcony actually.
Joe: Sometimes they would work and sometimes they wouldn't. We played a show at a warehouse and I was really inebriated and I fell and my head was right above the pyros and I don't know if it was you Jimi or whether it was Brian that was supposed to shoot them off, but I just got my head up right before they went off.
Jimi: [Laughs] I remember that.
Joe: Funny now that you look back at it.
Jimi: Set your hair on fire.
Joe: No way.
Jimi: Come on!

Well... [Laughs]
Jimi: I think we put her to sleep.

No. So this is your fourth album.
Jimi: Four albums in 10 years.
Joe: We're pacing ourselves. [Laughter] Every album is epic.

But I have to say, I really like it...
Jimi: Really. Cool, thanks.

Yeah, you better come back to the East Coast.
Jimi: All right. Hopefully. We've been out there, what, three times Markley?
Markley: Yeah, at least three times.
Jimi: You know, our scene's so different from the East Coast. People will get into some of the parts like the hardcore breakdown parts and stuff, like they'll be really into it and then we get back into our West-Coast style or whatever you wanna call it and they'll just stop. That's just how it is.
Joe: It's kinda like we're not punk enough for the whole Casualties/Unseen spiky-jacket mohawk crowd, but we're not hardcore enough for the Gorilla Biscuits whatever picking-up-change crowd. And we're not rock 'n' roll-y enough for all these fuckin' white-belt crowds and shit, so we kinda get stuck in limbo somewhere. Which is fine. We don't need a scene, man!

"We don't need a scene, man." [Laughs] Go it alone.
Joe: But we're super-popular in fuckin' Poland. [Laughter] For some reason, I don't know what it is.
Jimi: That's a bad joke.
Joe: Well, if you think about it like that. Damn.
Jimi: My grandparents are Polish.
Joe: We're also very popular in certain parts of Germany as well.
Jimi: And in Prague, where the absinthe is...at least the good stuff.

I know you can get a bootleg version, but...
Joe: Isn't the bootleg version green and the real version blue or is it backwards?
Markley: I don't know. I think the stuff you can get everywhere else in Europe doesn't have wormwood in it.
Jimi: Yeah, it's illegal in some countries.

Yeah, here, France and Canada... It always goes back to absinthe. I'm sorry. [Laughs]
Jimi: It's all right. Obviously we're into it too... We'll bring you a bottle back next time.

Oh yeah? Okay.
Jimi: We'll show you how to drink it proper.

Visit www.strychnine.net for band info/tour dates. The vinyl version of 'Born in a Bar' is available through Depth Charge Records.


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WITH OR WITHOUT YOU



By Kirby Unrest / Photography By Morgan McStotts

Name, band position, age, and favorite scene in "Super Troopers?"

Andy, I'm the MC. I'm 28, can't really remember any one scene from "Super Troopers," but I watch a lot of "Arrested Development."

Why did Diehard Youth break up, how soon after was WOWY formed and what do you feel are the similarities/ differences between the bands?

DY broke up for a few reasons. One was that I was the only original member left, also adding JJ and Rick to the band our style was changing and I had grown far too jaded to try to write DY type lyrics. We basically decided we all wanted keep playing music but have a new start something we could all create and have input instead of trying to play the already determined style that DY had. With WoWy we can showcase more of our influences from classic rock to hip hop. The similarities are that we are the same dudes but we all feel the music is far superior, and the lyrics are from a more realistic outlook, not negative or positive just how I really feel.

Is WOWY a Christian band like Diehard Youth was?

Well DY was never a "Christian" band its just like the whole Comeback Kid thing. Some members of WOWY are Christian I for one am, but I never have and never will push my beliefs on anyone, my faith may at times bleed through in my lyrics but its part of who I am and if someone wants to diss me or the band for us believing in something different is their right, even though it is a totally ignorant reason to like or dislike a band.

How are things going so far with WOWY? Has the response been good? Do you get requests for Diehard Youth covers ever?

Things are going good. We have been hooked up on some good shows, and a few West Coast tours. The record has been out for about 6 months now, and it is really starting to take off. We can't really tour since most of us have jobs and school, and I'm a full time firefighter now so it's not so easy to just pick up and go. Also I'm going to be a dad which I'm stoked on but with all that we do have some tours lined up for 2005. Yeah, we did some DY covers at the last In Control show, and that's probably the last time we will ever do them.

Are any of the WOWY tracks old Diehard Youth songs or did you start over from scratch?

One song off the demo was partially a DY song but everything else was brand new.

What subjects do your lyrics focus on?

I just write how I honestly feel about things that are going down. I try to keep away from the clichés, but damn, its hardcore you can't get too deep or kids won't even bother. I try to inspire kids to take a different look at life, friends, and especially hardcore. I'm over how insincere most kids at shows are these days, just there to jock the hyped band, or act tough, or look sexy. I attack that lyrically with the hope that kids will just be real.





What factors led you sign with Martyr? I mean besides the fact that Steve loves COPS, Subway sandwiches and Dawn Of The Dead possibly more than any other human being on this earth and isn't afraid to ramble for hours on end about all three.
Well Steve was going to do a DY release, so when we stopped that and started this he was the first dude we talked to. I didn't know about those obsessions but I do know he loves the ladies and him and Morg 2 Hate play strip chess online with webcams.

Why did you title the record "Six Reasons To Drop Out?"
Well I wanted to call it "True to Def" but I'm the only one in the band that was feeling it. The actual title was something we knew would make kids think or piss them off. I'm sure the posi core till death dudes think it's an insult, but it really isn't. Each song is about everyday happenings that every person goes through, and you can choose to rise above them or "drop out." Our next record is going to be called "War is ill" look for it in 2005.

The Warriors have said in many interviews that without Diehard Youth, Tehachapi would never have had a scene. Do you agree?
I don't mean to boast but its true. Without DY there would be no Warriors or Tehachapi Hardcore. I hope it will keep going long after I'm gone.

Speaking of Tehachapi, would you like to pronounce phonetically for the world, so that people can stop screwing the pronunciation up? Hahahaha.
T - Ah - Hatch- Ah- pee.

What are you guys up to recording/ touring wise?
Recording wise we have some new jams we are working on. Touring wise we have an east coast tour planned in April with The Warriors and Donnybrook, then we'll be doing some local stuff and a west coast around spring break hopefully with Killing The Dream.

Best band going right now?
Best bands right now are The Warriors, Comeback Kid and Kanye West. I'm not really up on the new bands but I do know these Cali bands that kids should get into, Killing The Dream, Set Your Goals, Donnybrook, IA, Allegiance, More 2 Pride, Make Move and east coast Outbreak, Some Kind Of Hate, Verse, The Distance, Bars and tons more. I can't name drop them all.

If you have any non-vegans/ vegetarians in the band, who can eat the most In N Out burgers in a sitting?
I'm going to say that Grady could eat the most at In N Out, none of us eat like 10 by 10s or whatever, I'm pretty sure JJ could drink the most Faderade though.

Worst movie you saw this year?
Alexander was weak.

Final words?
Thanks for the interview, pick up our record, download our record, steal our record, then read the lyrics and if you don't like them give it away. Any question hit us up at www.withorwithoutyou.cjb.net ↖

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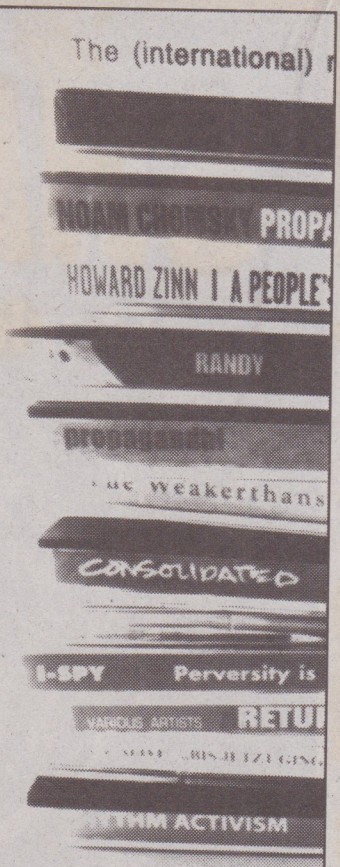
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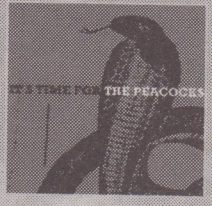
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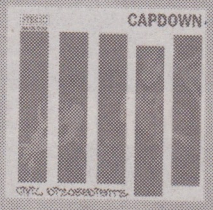
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COLISEUM



A BREATH OF FRESH AIR...

By Brian Peterson / Photography By Michelle Dosson

The hardcore and punk scene has, sadly, become very predictable the past few years. Lured by the guise of higher paydays and mainstream appeal, many of hardcore and punk's potentially finest outfits have gone the more typical route, following fashion and heat of the moment popularity while leaving originality and passion by the wayside. After hearing a few of these bands, the discriminating music fan is often left shrugging his or her shoulders and openly muttering, "What the hell happened to honesty and sincerity?"

While that rhetorical question may not have an immediate answer, it does give one cause for hope when the explosive arrival of bands like the Louisville, KY based Coliseum on Level Plane Records deliver a fresh sonic blast of those important aforementioned lacking qualities, with an extra frenzy of fist-pumping fury to boot.

Formed by Black Cross guitarist Ryan Patterson, Coliseum is a rollicking, head-nod-inducing, show-stopper of a caustic four-piece who, in roughly a year of existence, have managed to turn countless heads with a balls out, ferocious blend of primal punk rock and spirited hardcore that conjures up images of Black Flag, Rites of Spring and, yes, even Motorhead.

Comparisons aside, the thing that truly sets Coliseum apart from a lot of bands out there is its ability to convey a sense of communal sharing through an outpouring of intense emotion both on wax and during live performances. It only takes seeing this powerful troupe once to get caught up in its unbridled and passionate sonic art.

Fresh off of the band's Fall/Winter tour, Patterson sat down to share some of his thoughts about where Coliseum came from and where it is headed. Patterson, ever the soft-spoken and big-hearted individual, takes the immediate success of his new musical project in stride. At the same time, he's not afraid to share his thoughts on the state of music. If more bands were to approach their art with the same outlook and enthusiasm, there would be nothing to gripe about in terms of the void on uniqueness currently in place.

Why did you decide to go in the sonic direction that Coliseum comes from?

Well, I guess I always wanted to do a band with straightforward, fast hardcore kind of songs. Black Cross has those songs, but I don't feel like they are that band's forte. I think our favorite songs with Black Cross tend to be the more melodic or D.C.-ish ones, which aren't quite as in your face. Of course, I listen to The Clash and Fear and The Damned and Wire a lot more than I listen to, say, Mastodon or Converge, so I guess that also influences what I wanted to do. I guess I wanted to search through all of my influences to see what moves me, so I took theoretical elements from Motorhead and Discharge and combined that with stuff like Turbonegro and even The Stooges. I've never thought of us as a "Stooges" kind of band, but several people have mentioned that to me and it's awesome that influence pops out to people. Of course, anything I do people always mention that it has a Black Flag influence, but I guess they are kind of like the quintessential hardcore punk band, so I guess that isn't too hard to notice. [laughs] So, I wanted to do something that was fast and heavy and had simple, catchy choruses that you could pump your fist to...something that was, hopefully, well-written and intelligent but you could get into it on that base punk rock level.

Aside from doing Coliseum, you have been associated with a few other solid musical projects the past few years (Black Cross, National Acrobat). What does Coliseum enable you to do as a

musician that your other projects have not?

In a lot of ways I feel like Coliseum is like the culmination of everything I've done. I guess every band is like that, in a way. [laughs] You start a band and you've learned from every other band you've been in, and from life experiences and everything…but this band has just clicked more than with anything else I think I've ever done. People seem to respond to it in a way that I never would have imagined. I've had a lot of amazing interactions with people who have really connected with what we are doing and it's been really cool. I don't go for fate or things like that, but I guess I feel like Coliseum is who I am and what I'm about and not to say that it encompasses every aspect of me, but it's the most unfiltered expression that I think I've ever had. Of course, that might be because not only am I playing guitar but I'm also really singing for the first time. [laughs] It's been interesting. I think singing is something I wouldn't have been confident enough to do in the past, even as recent as a couple of years ago. I've never been very self-assured, so I don't think I could have put myself out there in a way like this when I was younger. Even at 25 I don't think I could have done it.



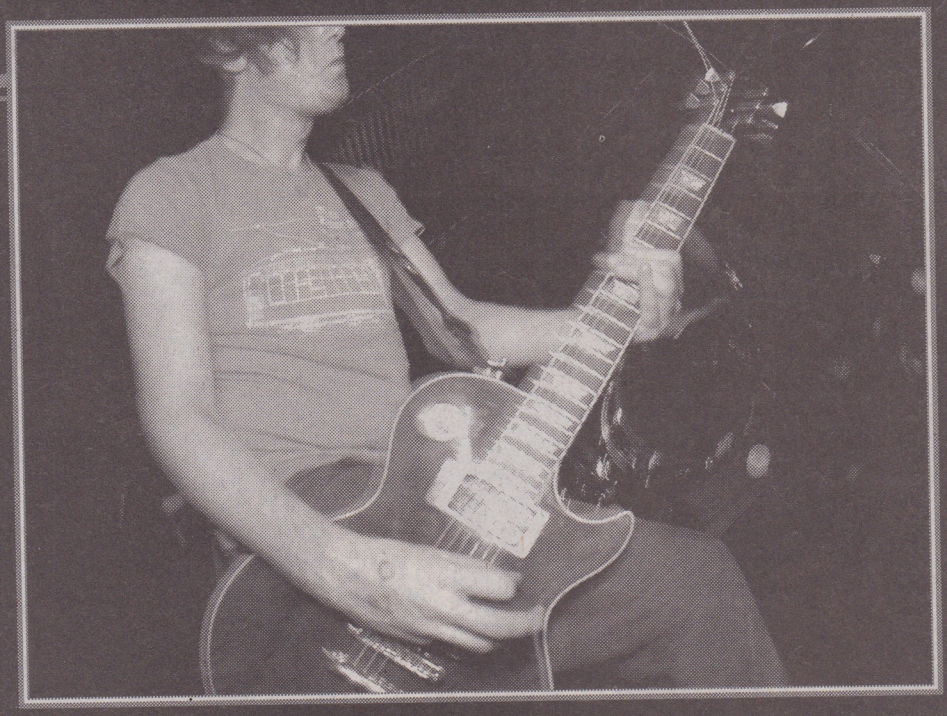


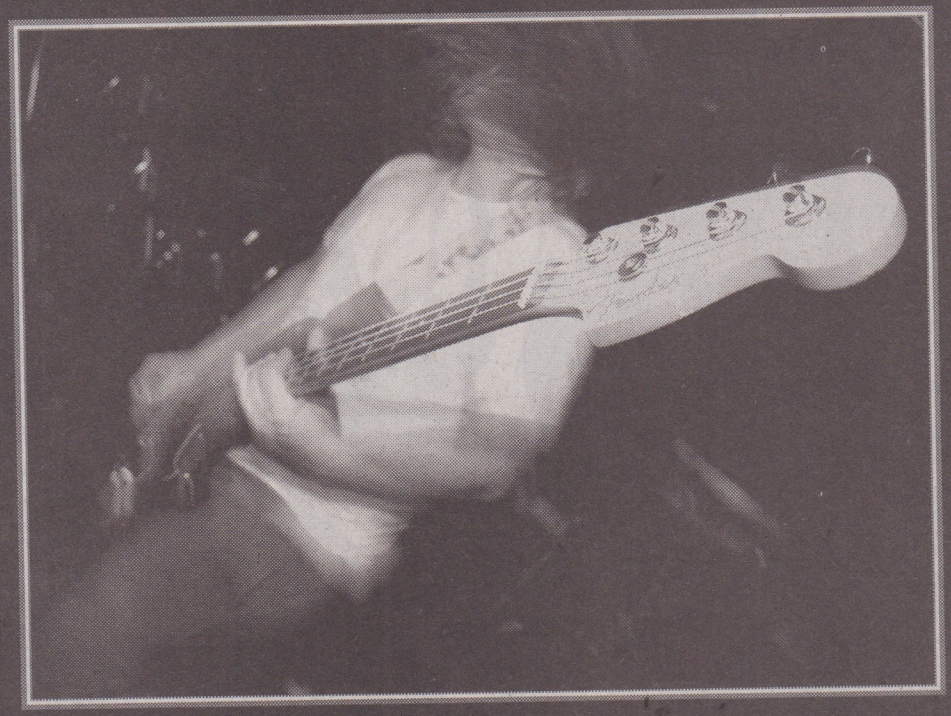
When I saw you guys play this summer you spoke a lot from the heart and explained the songs in a very personal way. I think the audience really respected and identified with what you were saying. How does it feel to be kind of the center of attention in a band for the first time?

It's a double-edged sword because on one hand I wanted to start a band where I could sing and play guitar, but then again everything is on me. I wanted this band to be more focused. So, you do that and on one hand if people dig it then it's cool because everything rests on my shoulders, but then again if people don't dig it then it's my fault, too. It's been an interesting and ongoing thing for us. Some nights I really can't hold it together and can't really pull anything profound from my heart to say on stage and I can't get it together and feel comfortable. It's been weird. We were on tour in September with Breather Resist and for maybe the first 10 days or so I felt like everything was going very well and I was able to really explain things when I was onstage and get out the things I wanted to get out. But then at some point it just took this total right turn and I couldn't seem to get my head on straight. I was kind of dealing with some things at home that, in hindsight, weren't really that big of a deal, but it kind of set me off a bit to make me feel not as good as I was feeling beforehand. So, I was kind of falling apart on stage. We played a show in D.C. where I just felt like I was totally rambling and…it was just weird. The reaction we got was great, but I felt like ramming my head into a wall when it was over. [laughs] So, it's been interesting to be the guy up there talking and if I feel like shit or if something is there weighing on my shoulders it's going to come out that night. It's not like I can just play my guitar and be like, "This is it, I'm gonna rock out." I have to really be up there and be in control.

What do you want to get across to people with this band and when you are sharing your thoughts on stage?

I don't have an agenda. The only thing I want to do is express how I feel in that moment and to try and cut out any bullshit straight down to this is what is going on with me at this second and I'm going to try and relate my feelings to you. I can get up there and ramble about political things sometimes; for instance, right after the election those things were weighing very heavily on my mind. I was driving around in the van and thinking about it all day. But some nights it's just fun; other nights I feel like shit and feel lonely…so that's what I want to share. Sometimes I just plain blow it. [laughs] In a way, I'm like it's okay because I want to be able to blow it. If you go see a band and they have some shtick down and they say the same things every night it tends to





feel fake. A lot of bands do that. You can see them five nights in a row and they are going to have the same set list and say the exact same things every night. I don't want to do that. I don't want to get into that rut of saying the same things. I don't want to drop a slogan. I'm not saying that I'm better or worse for trying to do this, but I guess that's what I tend to look for and admire in bands when I see them. I want to really connect with them.

Why do you think so many bands go through the motions these days as opposed to truly sharing something from the heart?

I don't know. Maybe it's that I'm 27 years old and I can't relate to a band of 20 year olds? I can relate to things like heartbreak in a different way than, say, a young emo band could. So, I'm not really sure why that is. I think part of the whole stigma of something like emo has become "sensitivity" as a theatrical statement to prove to someone how sensitive or in-touch with your emotions you are. I was at a friend's house and saw Headbanger's Ball on MTV. I don't want much of that kind of stuff these days, but it was interesting to see these bands like Mudvayne doing this sensitive metal balladry kind of thing and I thought, "What the fuck is this?" [laughs] Is this song with this weird weak ass "singing" part supposed to show that you are more emotional or in tune to pain and turmoil than yelling? I think people see aggression as anger and macho posturing so to get the opposite of that they have to do something "tender." I don't think that has to be the case, though. I think something can be heavy and screaming and still have real emotion behind it. Sometimes the emotion might be anger or frustration…but I don't know. The band's that I always connected with seemed to come from a different place than what a lot of people are into. Bands like Endpoint, Ignition, Rites of Spring or even Husker Du really laid it out. They were just honest about things and not in a contrived way. They expressed how they were feeling about the world. I don't want to say that's rare now, but for me that seems to be something I'm missing more these days. I guess that's what my goal is for Coliseum.

Has this goal changed your outlook as a person or musician?

Yeah, I feel like my personality comes out a lot more and I've become more approachable. I'm normally a pretty quiet person. I'm used to playing shows in the past where I just kind of get up there and play guitar and not really say much to anyone and hide away in a corner, but as a singer it forces me to open up and interact with people more. It's been really good as I've had some really amazing experiences even just in this past year connecting with people, which is awesome. It makes me feel less alone. We're at a point where I'm writing new songs now and I realize that I can't write the same songs I wrote a year ago because I'm dealing with the emotions the songs bring up and I'm moving on.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH JUSTIN ISHAM

By Tristan Staddon

Let's start right in on this new record, 'You and Me.' It seems to me there are a few prominent themes within the narrative of this record. Tell me a little about that. The main thing to me, and the title,'You and Me,' is kind of two-fold. It's got massive relationship issues beyond just boy-girl – like, friendship issues – and then 'You and Me' also mixes because I did the record on my own. I had multiple friends come in and help out with certain things. Paul, (former Shine bassist Paul Malinowski) who produced it was a friend, and Paxton (Pryor) who played drums I've known most of my life. It's more 'You and Me,' like, 'you want to do this shit? Who wants to help me? Oh, 'you and me.' (laughs) That, to me, is the theme. And the music, because it's got a lot of ups and downs throughout different styles, comes from that you and me aspect of having friends come in and help out. After a year and a half of demoing and everything, it's my own personal theme, whether yours is represented that way or not.

The title track, "You and Me," sits right between the two singles, "Tough Guy" and "Tough Girl." Because those two seem like companion pieces, what disconnect did you hope to achieve through those three songs?

They're companion pieces only because "Tough Guy," for whatever reason- I don't even think it has to do with the song- when I recorded I gave it some bullshit name. So I called it this stupid name, and I just kept using that and I think Josh Trustkill thought that was the name. They're two songs I liken in the same genre musically; I kind of go by the music to couple the flow of certain songs on the album. So "Tough Girl" just became the name because we must've thought it was funny at the time or something (laughs). So "You and Me" being in there, I just wanted the flow – a poppier, upbeat song then "You and Me," – a lot broader-scale song. And "Tough Guy" brings it back up. I like to go with the flow just to keep my mind interested, because I like to listen to it too. And "You and Me" is one of my favourite songs on

the album.

Taking a look at how this record came together, it had really been awhile since we had heard any new material out of the Open Hand camp.
(laughs). Yeah, I know.

So let's look back at the summer of 2003 when some rather unfortunate dramatics set in on you guys.
The band had an ever-changing lineup since the beginning, and except for Alex (Rodriguez, drummer), our bass and guitar players were always coming and going - probably because I'm overly anal, which can be overbearing. The band had been touring almost non-stop and it became difficult to maintain being cool with each other when we were all really broke and the band wasn't moving forward. It was a struggle up until about May when everyone left at last (laughs). We got back not from having toured in awhile and our guitar player, Sean (Woods), who's actually back in the band, he had a wife and money had become a major hassle for him to stay on the road. It was totally understandable, and for Alex there were opportunities with other bands. It was hard. I wanted to come back and sit around and write a bunch of shit, and record shit, and they wanted to continue touring because they're really all about it. But it worked out, and it was great. Paxton, a guy I've known since I moved to this country basically, since I've known him we've played music and he's really good. When it came time to record this album, Alex was doing his band, Saosin, and doing well. It's worked out, I think, because I don't really think that, stylistically, this is the right kind of shit for him anyway. For Paxton, this is totally his cup of tea. Mike, the original bass player in the band, came back and Sean, who was already in the band, stayed in the band (laughs). Paxton and I went to the studio in Colorado and we were there for three months. This girl named Hayley (Helmericks) kind of joined in – she's this girl who sings – and it was really cool. She really adds a lot to the shit. And that's where we are now.

Looking at the writing of You and Me, did you enjoy the fact that the responsibility was solely on you, and that you had the flexibility to jump from genre to genre?
Yeah, for sure. To be quite honest, I have a hard time jamming openly with people. For whatever reason I can't write that way, getting in a room with a bunch of guys. I'm not that good of musician to openly jam like that, so I write on my own. It's always been that way, in every band I've been in, for whatever reason. I'd write them and then get a bunch of guys and that's what we'd play. It's way easier with less cooks in the kitchen. It's easier for Sean to come in and throw his vibe onto something that's already written.

So tell me a little about heading out to Colorado and recording with Paul Malinowski.
Paxton and I are huge Shiner fans and never even imagined that we'd get to do this shit! Paxton hooked up with their drummer, Tim Dow, who was working at a bar out here in L.A. and also played with a bunch of other really cool bands like Year Of The Rabbit. He hooked up with him, got Paul Malinowski's number, sent him all the demos, and he was down with it. So Paxton and I went out to Colorado because he knew Bill Stevenson, who owns the Blasting Room, and knew the engineer from previous Shiner recordings. It was cool - they let us live there for three months, even while other bands were coming in. They have three separate rooms, so we just got to go in and hang out and basically we just became a three-piece for three months. Me, Paxton and Paul Malinowski – it was like the fucking greatest all-time experience. Then Allen Epley came in, the singer from Shiner, to sing one of the songs. It was cool for us, like a goal we had achieved.

Talking about people coming into the studio, you mentioned that Hayley Helmericks is involved in this record, and then in one of the videos. Tell me about how she and your other female guest got into the studio.
Hayley's the most prominent, but there's this other girl, Katy, from out here who sings on "Waiting For Katy." She sings in more of a Dolly Parton sort of way, even though she listens to hardcore and rock and everything else. She does a lot of acoustic stuff. That song actually has Alex doing the drums, then it was brought out, then with her singing. But it depends on which release, because the original was supposed to be 17 tracks – they cut out three for the U. S. release. Two out of the other three had another girl singing on them and they were really sort of ambient, like Portishead-type vibes. I think Josh thought it was just a cut too long.

But those will be out on the Roadrunner version in the U.K.?
Yeah, I guess so. But Hayley's the main one – she's basically a member of the band. Hopefully we can tour and there'll be a lot more stuff with her. And she came out of nowhere when we were recording- we didn't know her or anything.

Wow, so how did you get acquainted?
We were there so long, right by Colorado State University, so we started hanging out with people from around there. Hayley's boyfriend was singing in a band, who were really good and had recorded at the Blasting Room a month of two prior to us, and she had just come in to grab some mixes or shit. While we were in there, this guy Jason told us we should check them out, and Hayley had been the lead singer of that band for a brief time. Point is, on this she ripped. It was so good. At that point Katy was supposed to come out and do "Tough Girl" and more – I had a lot more vocal parts that I wanted. But Katy had some shit going on, where she couldn't come out, so it worked out perfect. So we asked (Hayley's) boyfriend if it was cool if she came over to hang out and sing some stuff, and she did. Basically, we had to leave for an hour while she sat in a room and listened to the song. When we came back, she had recorded one track, and doubled it all in one take. Then she rolled out; that was it (laughs).

That's impressive. So you've gained another member then?
Yeah, it was really awesome. The only problem is, she lives in Ft. Collins, Colorado, and we live in L.A. We've been doing other local shows here, and we know other girls who can sing, they come up... we've gone through like four. It's cool, but when we're on the road, I'm looking forward to seeing the band.

One of the other songs that I really enjoy on this record is called "Crooked Crown," and along with "Trench Warfare" and "Newspeak," there seem to be some not-so-subtle references to the world surrounding us. Do you want to elaborate for me?
Yeah, I guess I never looked at it that way. I'm madly obsessed with military reference books and political reference books. I'm really, really into them. Old war history and stuff. Same could go for the first song, "Pure Concentrated Evil," I guess. Maybe subconsciously, though. I'm a huge George Orwell fan, and used to be in an old grindcore band called Newspeak. Our whole mission was all

anti-establishment bullshit. Our outlook now though is supposed to be more to have a fun time, and I have issues with depression and shit, and there's no reason to get down about stuff. I see a lot of hardcore bands – I guess they're only considered hardcore because of the labels they're on – and everyone's really bummed and angry singing this hard-up shit, and they have it really well. I mean, "Trench Warfare" has nothing to do with trench warfare. Originally I was going to call the album "Cover Me, I'm Going In." I had this theme about a secret-agent guy... I don't really know why (laughs). But it evolved I guess. I'm babbling.

No, no - there's a lot of insight into your personality there. Looking back at The Dream, the last record, one thing that was immediately striking about it was the artwork. Now you're again enlisting Don Clark, who's done great work for Poison The Well and A Static Lullaby.
Yeah, he did that last album and this one. The finished version, is going to be all intricate and cut up. He sent me one that just opened into all these things, all three-dimensional. The original influence of the design was from this painting I found. I'm from Germany, so my Oma and Opa... you don't know what the fuck I'm talking about do you?

No, I do actually, keep going.
O.k., well my Oma works at this thrift store for the humane society. And sometimes they get this weird shit from the 70s that would've hung in some doctor's office. So that's what I got - this thing from a guy named M. Thrasher (laughs). It was cool, actually. Long story made as short as possible, he made all of these spirals that looked like mountains with this sun in the sky. And then on the glass – he painted on the actual glass – he drew these intricate flowers and shit, and I sent the photo of that to Don saying I liked the idea of the painting on the glass. He took it and went to a whole new world. The You and Me thing worked out really well; the girl and the hand, throwing a knife in the fucking heart – it's perfect.

Let's talk about another artistic avenue you just finished. Tell me about filming the two videos with the amazing Darren Doane.
Darren came and saw the band when we had a couple of shows with Fu Manchu and he was pretty into it, and agreed to do a video. At first we were only going to do one, and we picked "Tough Guy," because we don't have much money to work with, so we have to keep our sights set to what we're dealing with. But Darren was super, super cool and gave us so much more for our dollar's worth. We have the two videos that look really cool, and he was really cool. He basically hooked us up, just for his own passion of doing it. I just wanted to do the video for "Tough Girl" as an excuse to get Hayley involved again, and she came out, we did both videos in one day in two different places. He had it totally together.

Now, the last song on the American version, called "Hard Night," is going to be on the soundtrack of The Cave, a movie due out this spring.
Wow, cool. I had no idea, man.

Really?
(laughs) I'm out of the loop. That's cool though – I really like that song. It's my second favourite on the album. I'll have to see that movie now for sure.

Shifting focus a bit to look at the Trustkill family, it seems that every family has a black sheep. So in this field of black sheep, you guys are probably the white one. How do you fit into the whole family over at TK?
(laughs). Well, I like it in that it's always good to be different and be on your own. But in a way, it's kind of difficult. I think Josh is a great businessman, and it really is a one-man operation and I appreciate that. But, at the same time, he has such a certain style that he does really well with, a kind of band that he does really well with. I love hardcore, I was in a hardcore band, and I support the hardcore scene but it's kind of hard. I don't consider Open Hand a hardcore band – I grew up on Strife, so my definition is different – but we get lumped in with a lot of hardcore because of Trustkill and everyone in the band coming from the hardcore scene. So it becomes kind of difficult, but I really like Trustkill and I really like being part of something I looked up to for a long time. It's got its pros and cons. If we were Bleeding Through... I mean, Josh has spent years and years creating an audience for his record label off of bands with the intensity of Bleeding Through and Terror and all these other bands. So when you've spent so many years, you create an audience where they buy Trustkill shit, because they want to see that kind of shit. It's like back in the 90s when you bought Roadrunner Records stuff, you knew what you were going to get. So now he signs bands that are really outside of that, and Open Hand, I felt, was one of them, but he has bands on there now that sound more to me like old Open Hand. This album especially seems to be more obscure for Josh, so I don't know. I've had a great experience on there, and I don't know what the future holds, but I've had a great experience so far.

And it's got to be a nice feeling being one of the forces helping it grow.
I must say, that in the whole time being on that label, when none of the other bands really sounded like us, we were never made to feel like an outsider band. We got along at hardcore shows as well at hardcore shows as at emo shows or with grindcore stuff. It's all guitar rock.

I've also read that you're a big L.A. Lakers fan. Is this true?
I actually was. Right after the second title I was into it, because we don't really have a football team here. But I've lost my appreciation for it. Something I like to say is, they just have too many rock stars in that band. They don't give a shit about playing basketball, they just care about themselves. And right around then was when I didn't really have a place to live, so I had no tv, and just forgot about the season (laughs). Besides, it's not like I was born here, so I don't have any weird loyalty to the city.

Fair enough, Justin. Now I know you're heading out with Zao and The Juliana Theory in early 2005 and also hitting Europe and Japan. Preview your 2005 for me.
For me, touring is the number one priority. My philosophy for a band that doesn't tour – I hate to use this analogy – but it's like a bomb that's just sitting in some warehouse. The purpose of the thing is to blow up, just like the purpose of the band is to play. It's way easier to be on the road. I hope when the album comes out it gets us on decent tours and helps the band and finances us. Because that makes everyone happy. I just want to get it out – I've sat here with it for so long, and I've gone over it with a fine-toothed comb so much I've driven myself crazy. I just want it to get out.

Awesome. Is there anything I've forgotten to ask, or that you'd like to add today?
My one resolution this year is to be as productive as I can. Thanks for the interest, and for listening to me babble for a long time.

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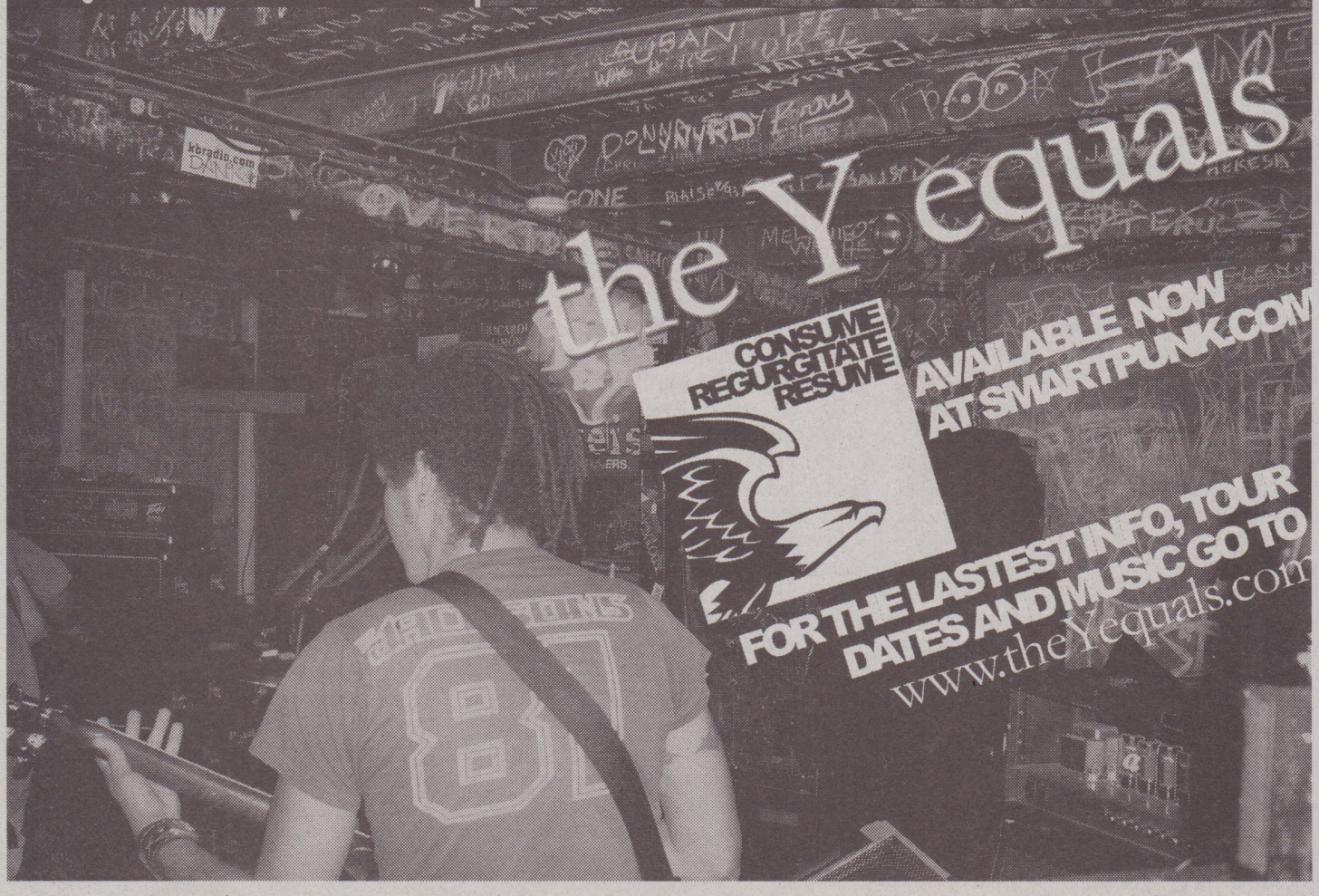
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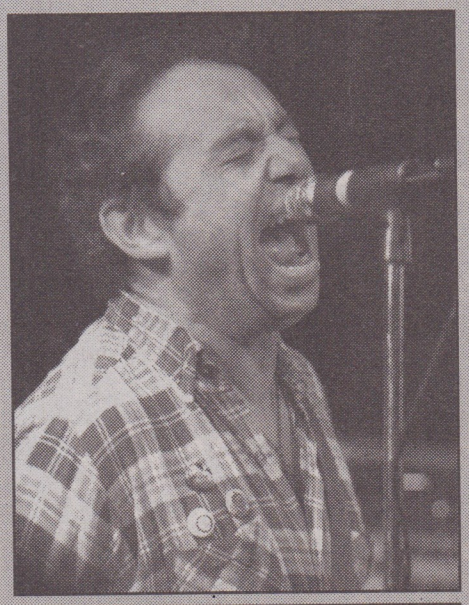
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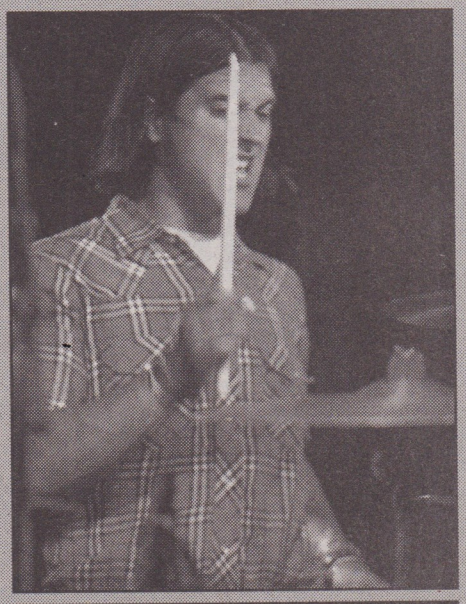
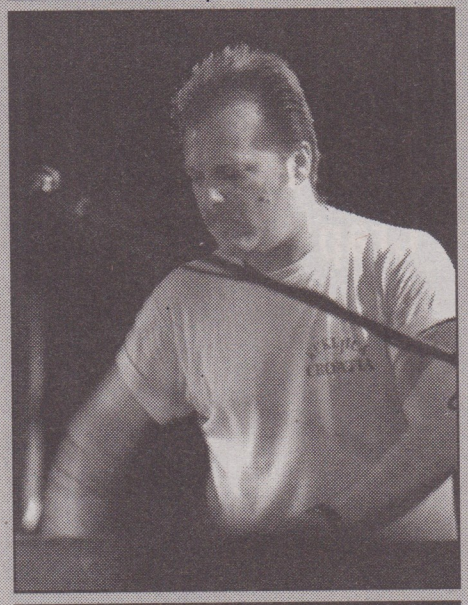
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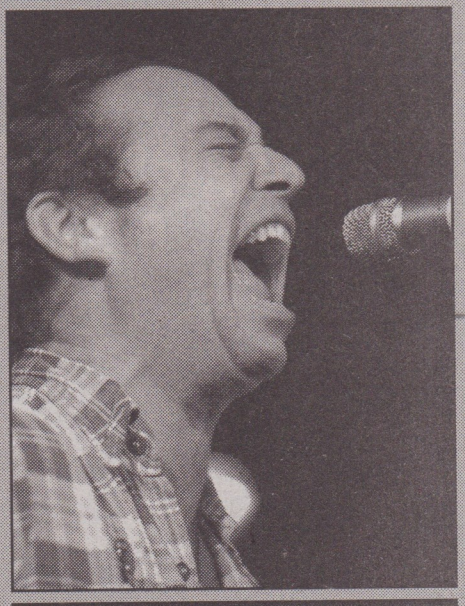
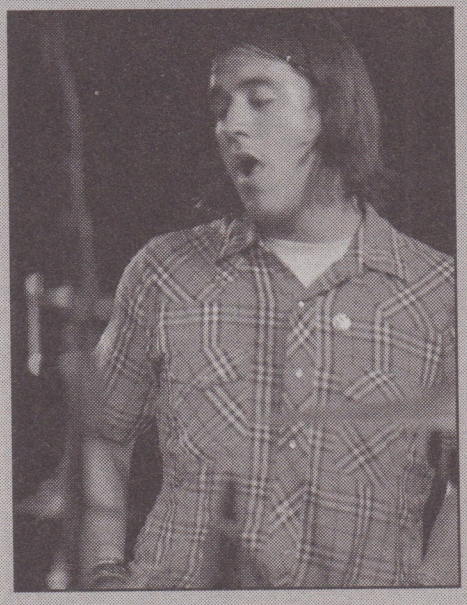
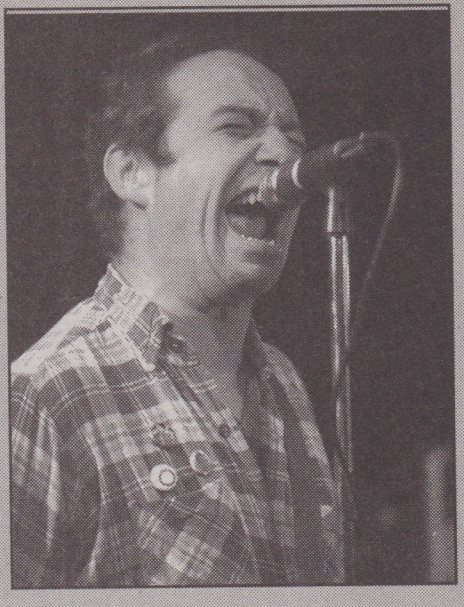
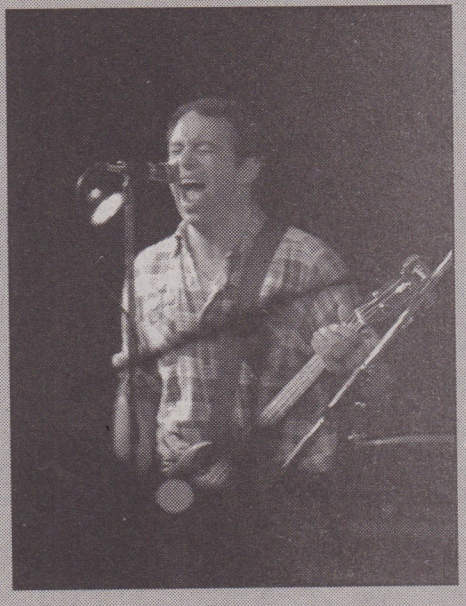


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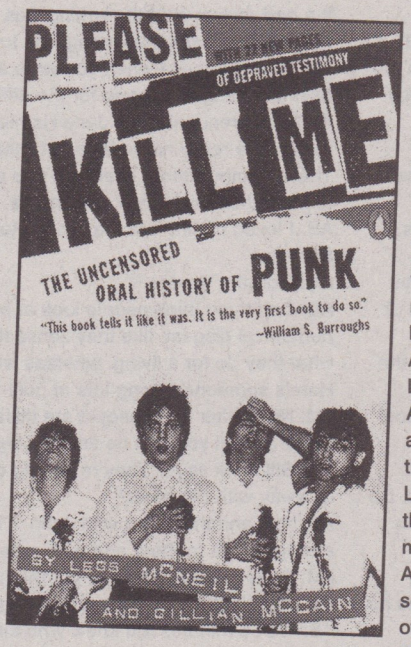
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ALAN BISBORT

Legs McNeil Does Not Wank Off to Porn
Punk legend goes to (the other) Hollywood



Roderick Edward "Legs" McNeil was the one-time "resident punk" at New York's *Punk Magazine*, which he cofounded with boyhood pal, John Holmstrom. Out of his experiences, and those of his friends and colleagues in the early American punk community, he and Gillian McCain created an oral history of the genre, *Please Kill Me*, that has never been out of print since its publication in 1996 and has gone on to be one of the biggest-selling books ever about rock 'n' roll.

Who would have thought it of a guy who barely made it out of Cheshire High School in Connecticut? Even Legs was/is baffled by the success of the book and his own relative sanity and sobriety as he nears age 50. As he put it in a recent conversation with me, "I'd be in jail if I got what I deserved. I never knew that *Please Kill Me* was going to sell. I mean, Johnny Thunders only sold about 20 copies of his albums. But now the book is in paperback, a Penguin classic. I love that orange spine. Life is unfair but I just want to make it unfair in my favor."

Legs is poised for another of his monsters to enter the bestselling lists. While *Please Kill Me* aired the dirty laundry of the punk scene, his new book opens the door on the dirtiest secret in the land: the porn film industry. It's called *The Other Hollywood: The Uncensored Oral History of the Porn Film Industry*—the result of eight years of research—and it rips the G-string off the Pandora's box of America's sexual obsessions. The porn film industry, he reports, is now a highly profitable $10 billion per year enterprise that has infiltrated mainstream American culture and made a lot of "family values" Republicans obscenely rich in the process. That $10 billion surpasses all of Hollywood's annual box office receipts; it also does not include revenues from porn magazines, Internet sites, cable adult channels, and sex devices. Nor does it take into account the following assertion by *U.S. News and World Report*: "Americans now spend more money at strip clubs than at Broadway, off-Broadway, regional and nonprofit."

The format is the same as Please Kill Me. McNeil has recorded the voices of those who were on the front lines, those in the trenches, those who made this industry with their bodies, and he has captured the makers and shakers and movers in their own vernacular, their own words, their own spins, their own gutwrenching honesty, and just let them tell it all the way that Studs Terkel has done it with his numerous bestselling oral histories. They speak. You decide, in other words, whether porn is good or evil or something in between. Legs sure isn't going to lay any judgments on it. In the book's introduction, he writes, "To all our born-again Christian friends, I'm sorry that we're not judgmental in our narrative—but to our minds porn's been demonized long enough. What we wanted to do, instead, was to let the people involved speak for themselves: the actors and actresses, cops and mobsters, producers and directors, photographers and writers, hustlers and suitcase pimps, and everyone else in between."

Legs McNeil showed up at my Connecticut doorstep when he was recently in the area visiting his mother and high school friend, Tom Hearn (great musician/songwriter: keep an eye out for his band, Big Fat Combo).

The following is a shortened version of our conversation.

LM: This is the great Legs McNeil talking to Alan Pisspoor, I mean, Bisbort.

AB: Well...shit...you've already flustered me.

LM: You're not supposed to let the interviewee throw you.

AB: [goes into back room, returns with inscribed poster of Seka, the "goddess of porn," and the awestruck McNeil shows Bisbort the reverence he deserves. The sounds of a chair scooting back can be heard as McNeil prostrates himself at Bisbort's feet].

AB: The book is great.

LM: It better be. It took eight fucking years.

AB: You mentioned that the book is not titillating in the erotic sense, and you were right. But it does have these human interest stories that were surprising and compelling.

LM: Well, people really don't talk about sex graphically. The hard thing about porn and me is that I never believe any of it. So I can't masturbate to it because I don't believe it.

AB: The first voice in the book belongs to John Waters, which is somehow perfect. The thing I liked about the book among many other things was the humor. Before it became this kind of cold-blooded industry, there was this humor. It was kind of tied in with this hippie ethic, in a way. Or maybe I'm wrong.

LM: No, you're dead right.

AB: It's embodied by people like Harry Reems, who was well read and articulate...

LM: And Fred Lincoln. They told him, 'You look like a producer' and he said, 'I don't look like a producer...I look like a hipster."

AB: They were doing Shakespeare and eeking out a living in these cold-water flats. Serious actors who didn't have a pot to piss in. And somebody comes along and says you can do some live 'modeling' for X amount of dollars and you understand why they did it. They were performers to start with...so the performance hurdle was already cleared. There was the one quote, "This is the happiest moment of my life.' But then there was the cold underside where the guy says, early in the book, that this was better than live action because it doesn't talk back. It dawned on me that that's what people who are obsessed with porn and watch it a lot like about it. It doesn't talk back.

LM: I don't really know about people who are obsessed with porn think about it. I didn't really set out to find out that part of it.

AB: You had the big fish...the stories about people you would never expect to be heard, much less these people tracked down. How hard was it to track down the players?

LM: It was pretty hard. But once I interviewed someone, I did what the FBI does. I went from one person to the next person to the next person and tried to piece together the narrative from what they told me. Leapfrog.

AB: It's one thing to track them down, but another to gain their confidence. It seems to me that they could say to you, 'What do I have to gain from talking to you?'

LM: People were very nice. A lot of people I interviewed over years, like Sharon Mitchell and Fred Lincoln. They were great voices, and when you get a great voice you just let it go.

AB: Sort of like the Danny Fields' voice in the punk book, tying up all the loose ends.

ALAN BISBORT

LM: Yes, that's right. [*Please Kill Me* was dedicated to the late Danny Fields, "forever the coolest guy in the room."]
AB: In my naivete, I didn't anticipate that drugs would be such a big part of the scene.
LM: But they were such a huge part of the 1960s and 1970s and 1980s. I think when you're a guy or a girl, and sex for work becomes a pain in the ass, like anything else. You have to get it up, you have to be slutty. Why not take some drugs, you know?
AB: If they weren't doing porn, they'd be doing strip clubs, right?
LM: They'd dance. That was a 1980s and 1990s thing, the 'professional' dancing thing.
AB: You go to those places or read about them in Carl Hiassen novels and there's always these mean-ass guys who are controlling these women. And it's true with the porno, with guys like Chuck Traynor, what he did to Linda Lovelace [husband and wife at the time of the making of Deep Throat, the most successful film in porn history].
LM: Chuck Traynor. He didn't really manipulate Linda. If you notice in the book about Linda, she complains about Chuck, then she complains about Larry Marciano, then she complains about women against pornography.
AB: She's a fascinating character because you have sympathy for her and yet you also don't really like her. She wants it so badly both ways. Do you think part of that is that she doesn't want to own up to some of the stuff she did?
LM: Yes.
AB: But you got to admit, Legs, letting your wife have sex with a dog is as low as you can go.
LM: Yes, but I don't see the big deal...at least at the time. Now it's a big deal that she had sex with a dog, but when Wolfe, what's his name, Bob Wolfe, made that scene, they were just making up stuff as they went along, it was just what came up on the day.
AB: But they had a dog ready to go, that's the thing.
LM: I don't think they forced her. Eric Edwards is the nicest guy and he told me there was no gun there, no coercion. And Chuck wasn't even there that day.
AB: Did you talk to Linda Lovelace, or use interview tapes from other sources?
LM: I talked to her.
AB: How did she strike you? Believable? Sympathetic?
LM: As a liar, as someone who would go any way.
AB: What was the context? Did you go to her house, talk on the phone?
LM: No, I shot her for the Court TV program, within the context of that program.
AB: Did she try to choreograph the whole thing?
LM: Well, she had that same old rap she had been using for years which I didn't really want to hear, about how pornography was evil and they were making it with infants and it was so ludicrous...just tell me what happened, that's all I really wanted to know. I wanted the reader to be able to make up their own minds about what happened. What was really important for me, since Linda was so often interviewed on this subject, was to get Chuck's side of the story. Linda was never that bright. She wasn't at all like Marilyn Chambers. Marilyn was hysterical.
AB: She's great, one of the most pleasant voices in the book, a lefty hippie who was making underground films and went to San Francisco and saw the humor of it.
LM: I called her about a month ago again, because Chuck Traynor said this thing about her having sex with 21 guys on her 21st birthday. And she said, 'I remember that being true.' And I said, 'Do you mind if I put that in the book?' And she said, 'No, go ahead. What do I care?' She was great.
AB: You wrote a screenplay for her.
LM: For her comeback movie, "Still Insatiable."
AB: And it was made into a film?
LM: Oh yeah. It sold a lot. AVN [porn film industry ratings magazine] gave it a bad review, said the writing was bad.
AB: Which means the writing was too good for a porn film.
LM: What happens when you write a porn movie screenplay is that they have to change it around for the different girls they get for the shoot, so it's barely recognizable. Jane Hamilton got me that gig. Jane's a great friend, she really helped me out. Her screen name is Veronica Hart. That's another thing. Everyone has a porn name and a real name. I tried to keep them all in their porn name.
AB: I loved finding out that Harry Reems is really Herb Streicher. And Seka is...
LM: Dorothy Yance.
AB: Don't you think people look at porn stars with an immediate sort of puritanical disgust, like they sense that they should be disgusted with what they do for a living, whereas what they really feel is complete envy. Here's someone having lots of guilt-free sex with beautiful partners...
LM: No, I think most people are titillated.
AB: True, but you can be titillated by a car wreck.
LM: Bill Mark says, 'They're jerking off to us with one hand and pushing us away with the other.'
AB: Yes, and that thing with John "The Wadd" Holmes, where he arranged that robbery and then ratted on his friends and got them killed.
LM: I was actually going to put the names of the guys who killed them in the book, but they were never brought to justice. I know who did it.
AB: Wait a minute. You know who killed those four people on Wonderland Avenue?
LM: They killed Ron Launius and the other guy.
AB: Pres. Reagan, via the Meese Commission, tried to crack down on porn. The hypocrisy of it all. I wouldn't be surprised if there were early skin flicks with Ronnie and Nancy in them. Wasn't the legend that there are porno films with Chuck Connors in them?
LM: It wasn't a legend. He was in them. A lot of them were. Sylvester Stallone was in porno films.
AB: What is the contemporary porn industry like? Does it bear any resemblance to this as it's depicted in your book? It strikes me as this completely cold-blooded industry now.
LM: It is. That's not my interest, though.
AB: They're not busting porn films anymore, are they?
LM: Yes, they are.
AB: Under what pretext.
LM: ITOM. Interstate Transportation of Obscene Matter. Obscenity. They can make them in L.A. without cops busting them, but they'll try them in, say, Oklahoma or Utah, where they are sold.
AB: As long as they don't leave the state, they're alright?
LM: I don't know. I've never figured that out. It seems sort of stupid to me. They did this trial in Utah, which is not in the book but was on the Court TV program, where they said we're all Mormons and we don't want this material here. And the lawyer, who was a Mormon, went next door to the hotel and got all the records of all the dirty movies people watched, which were an unbelievably large number, and said 'This seems to be our community standards" and they threw the case out of court. I don't see how they can win. But they can waste a lot of money. I don't think they want to win. They just want to tie you up and make it expensive for you.
AB: Did any of the other Rat Packers besides Sammy Davis Jr. get into porn?
LM: Who, Dino? Dean Martin went home every night. I think they may have all watched "Deep Throat" at Spiro Agnew's place in Florida. They were living the life, why do they need to see it portrayed on film? On the Billion Dollar Baby tour, Alice Cooper's entourage all had porn movies to

ALAN BISBORT

watch, but they're all living a life that is graphically excessive, so nobody wanted to watch it. I think Sammy was just a freak.

AB: How did the book itself come about?

LM: I knew as soon as I finished *Please Kill Me* I was going to do this book. I was in really good writing form. Then we had to go on a tour for a year with the punk book and ended up at the Chateau Marmont and I interviewed Sharon Mitchell and got a house right around the corner and just moved in and decided to stay there and follow the story. Once I talked to Sharon I moved on to the next person, and eventually it became known I was reliable and was not going to trash them. Sharon really helped me and Jane helped me.

AB: Were you also working for Spin at the time?

LM: No, that was already gone. I was working on a script for the movie.

AB: The movie? What movie?

LM: *Please Kill Me.*

AB: There is a movie? Did it ever appear?

LM: They're still making it. I left *Spin* in 1992 and then did *Nerve* 1992, which lasted six issues, then I went into a depression, then I did *Please Kill Me*.

LM: I did the porn book on spec for four years. I couldn't get anyone interested. It wasn't until Shannon [Legs' girlfriend] died that I got the book deal.

AB: So you did this on spec for four years. So there was a lot riding on this.

LM: I had to convince everyone that I was serious. No one believed me, of course.

AB: It must have come across the publishers' desks. How did it end up on Judith Regan's desk?

LM: After the Court TV program. Once people could see what I was doing, they understood that a book was here.

AB: Would a book about the gay porn industry have an entirely different set of characters? I mean the producers, the Mob, the distributors.

LM: Oh yes. The gay people were more responsible when it first broke. They took AIDS very seriously, they used condoms, as John Waters pointed out in the book. The heteros, it didn't hit them until later. I was in LA when it hit the hetero community. I was going to these private meeetings of the porn industry and sworn into secrecy not to write about it. This was in 1998. Sharon Mitchell did a great fucking job, because she pioneered PNR/DNA testing for the virus. She's really a hero.

AB: There are heroes throughout. And sometimes the heroes are villains, too.

LM: Right. I wanted to go across real moral boundaries, not just sexual moral boundaries, like with Pat Livingston, the FBI agent. His life fell apart.

AB: But his story is like a Dostoevsky novel. This idea that you're playing at being evil and eventually evil gets you. If you want to pretend to be somebody, be careful who you pretend to be.

LM: That's what I loved about his story. When you look into the void, the void also looks into you. Which is why I've moved to Pennsylvania. You don't look into the void out there. ↖



MAROON



By Janelle Jones

Maroon bassist Tom-Eric Moraweck was kind enough to answer (in great length!) some questions from AMP as their latest full-length, 'Endorsed by Hate' (Century Media/Abacus) marks the German band's initial release on these shores. Overflowing with monstrously powerful metal-core (emphasis on the metal!), this record is sure to garner the five-piece, which also includes vocalist Andre Moraweck, drummer Nick Wachsmuth, and the guitarists Sebastian (Grund and Rieche), a massive amount of new fans the world over. Turns out the band are looking to embark on their first U.S. tour as well, so get ready. Their live show, according to Tom, is akin to visiting hell... Sounds good to us!

Your most recent addition to the band was Sebastian Rieche on guitar. Did it take a while to find the right person to fill the position? Why'd you go with him?

The funny thing about him is we've know each other for about 10 years now. He went to the same school as I did, and as he came to our school with long hair wearing a Metallica shirt, I knew that this guy was cool! So, we became very close friends. But at this time Sebastian Grund and I already played in a grindcore/punk band together, and Sebastian Rieche and Nick Wachsmuth had their own death-metal band. We always visited each other and jammed together, but we never thought about forming a band together. Even when we formed Maroon in the beginning of 1998 we didn't think of asking him to play guitar, because he had his own projects and I think it wasn't his kind of music we were playing at this time. In 2003 we had to make a decision. We couldn't go on with our old guitarist Marc, and the first one who came to mind was Sebastian Rieche because we knew that he is a perfect guitarist and a great person. At this time, Andre, Nick, and Sebastian R. had a project together, which made things even more easy. After playing a few shows with some session guitarist we asked him and he gave up everything else and went on tour with us. So, he is just a nice person, he is vegan and straight-edge, a great guitar player, and we have been close friends for years now!

What's your hometown like? Have a good scene there at all?

We all moved to Nordhausen in the last year except for Sebastian R., who still lives at his parents' house. Before that we all lived in the same small village near Nordhausen called Rossla, with about 2500 inhabitants. Nick and Sebastian R. used to live in Breitenstein, a small village in the middle of the Harz mountains, with about 300 inhabitants. These two villages were 30 minutes away from each other, so we visited each other a lot. So, we soon got a rehearsal room in Nordhausen, that meant we had to drive 20 minutes to rehearse, so everyone (except Sebastian R.) decided to move here after some time. Now we all live here, and our new rehearsal room is in Rossla ha ha! So we have to drive again! Nordhausen is a small town in East Germany with about 55,000 inhabitants. It was almost fully destroyed in the Second World War, so we now have a lot of post-war buildings. It is quiet and very relaxed, and we all like living here. The scene started as we as a band started. Before there was one HC band and a few metal and punk bands and we were part of this scene as teens – that was all around 1990/'91, shortly after the reunion of Germany. We went to punk and HC shows and soon formed our own bands. Then in 1998 we formed Maroon and played this metal style of hardcore and were the first band who played this kind of music in our area. We came up with ideas like straight-edge and veganism and a lot of new kids were very interested and the scene really started to explode! We played a lot of shows here in the beginning and every time 300 people showed up, all people whose faces you knew and even our old punk/metal friends. So the first four years it was all very united and kind of big and exciting here. A lot of people became straight-edge and vegan and everyone knew each other. But then we played a lot of tours and weren't at home very often and it all somehow felt off a bit. A lot of people sold out and they closed all our youth centers and our rehearsal rooms. The scene is still strong today, but it's not the same like three years ago.

Your latest record, 'Endorsed by Hate', is the first to be released in North America. What do you hope to accomplish with its release worldwide?

We want as many people as possible to hear the album because we are very proud of it and we think it deserves a little bit more attention! We were on tour almost the whole year to promote it and now we have a chance (with the help of Century Media and Abacus) to get out the album in the U.S., and that's great! USA [has] a lot of the best bands in every genre, whether it be pop, metal, or hardcore, and it is a very important land when it comes to music and youth culture. And there live you can reach so many people! So we hope we can find some new fans in the USA and hopefully we'll tour there soon, to show you what Maroon is all about!

What's the opening track, "Catharsis," supposed to represent?

It's just some sounds and you can hear a tank and screams and shots. As we made this track together with Tue Madsen (our producer) in the studio, we thought about if we should just name it "Intro," or if it represents something to us. I came up with the name "Catharsis" because I always liked the word and always wanted to use it. As I listened to the sounds, I realized that for me it was kind of calm and quiet but in the background there are war-sounds and talking. As I listened to it, it was like it's the sound of a situation shortly after a big catastrophe or an atomic clash.



Photo By Volker Müller-Veith

and I felt kind of depressed. So, "Catharsis" came to my mind because it sounds like everything you knew is over and it's a minute full of nothingness and confusion, before it gets louder again and ends with a shot. And this shot is the beginning of something new. This intro is kind of eerie and it's like the bridge from the end of days to the beginning of something new, so I thought "Catharsis" is the perfect word for this.

The instrumental track "The Omega Suite" sounds pretty different from the rest of the record. It has a real sad, melancholy, depressed (but beautiful), almost sludgy Crowbar-like feeling to it. Can you go over how this particular composition came about?
We had written most of the songs for 'Endorsed by Hate' and realized that they were all very hard and aggressive. They sounded like [they were] of one piece. Every song is different, but you can always hear that they belong to this one record. So, there is always the danger that a record gets somehow boring, so we thought of doing something instrumental to create something of a break that doesn't really fit in the record, but as you listen to it, it makes perfect sense... We always wanted to do an instrumental track but were a bit afraid of doing it because it's not very common in hardcore music. But the songs were much more metal than they were hardcore, so we pursued the idea further. Firstly, we wanted to make some guitar noises and a drum beat, something without a real melody and structure, but I wasn't very happy with it and I could convince the others that they weren't happy with it, too ha ha! I wanted a real song, a classic instrumental song. The record is so strong; the songs are the best we ever wrote, so it would be lame to destroy this with a half-hearted song existing of guitar noise, so we made "The Omega Suite". As we started, we looked to Metallica who made the best instrumental songs ever and there we saw the structure of acoustic part to a harder riff and another riff before ending on acoustic again, but always melodic and melancholic! So we got this very simple guitar riff, but it sounded very dark and depressed, and around this we built the song and refined it in the studio with the acoustic guitar effects and the bells. Some people say that the beginning sounds like "The Unforgiven", which is a fucking great honor!

Though you have some extremely (and obviously) positive lyrics (I'm thinking "Chosen Fate" in particular), some of your lyrics are rather dark, bleak, and well, not pretty – but definitely brutally honest. You sing sometimes of things people don't want to hear, like Armageddon ("The Worlds Havoc"), which seems to complement your devastatingly heavy and vicious musical style well. Can you discuss how your lyrics and music work together and go hand and hand?
You are great. You are the first one who really reads the lyrics, maybe it's also because we use your language. People here always say, "Your new record is about hate and violence, isn't it?" But they don't see the very positive lyrics of "Chosen Fate", they think we just sing about death and murder; we definitely do, but not the whole time. "Chosen Fate" is the most positive song we've ever written. It is so full of faith, and that is special because we all lost faith in almost everything. It's about hope, about not giving up, and fighting for what is important to you! It's just like, "Believe in yourself and stay true to who you are and stick to your family and friends and everything is possible and will turn out right!" Of course I know it isn't always that easy, and so most of the other lyrics on this album are dealing with this desperation. As Andre and I came in the rehearsal room with the first lyrics, we realized that we, independent from each other, wrote almost the same stuff. I mean we are brothers and we meet a lot and we realized that in the last two years our resignation and anger grew and you can see this in the lyrics of 'Endorsed by Hate'. We somehow lost faith in this world and resignation took place where once was hope. We sing about the things that happen around us everyday like animal slaughter, the destruction of our planet or the senseless violence we do to each other. And heavy music needs heavy lyrics I think. We play metal because we are different, musically and as people. We have different views on this world than "normal" people. Most parts of our society close their eyes or look away when bad things happen, and they even refuse to talk about all the shit that is happening, but we sing about it. It is there! Everywhere is violence and injustice, and if we don't change our behavior against mother earth, more and more catastrophes will appear and more and more suffering will come along with that! But we don't sing about this to glorify it, on the contrary, we sing about it to wake up as many people as possible to stop this madness before it's too late! So all our songs also contain hope – we just describe what might happen, but also say that there's still a little bit of hope if we just would wake up. The record deals mostly with the bad aspects of life in all their forms. "The Worlds Havoc" is about the end of days and natural catastrophes, "Without a Face" is



Photo By Sebastian Klenke

about Jack the Ripper, a never caught psychopath who may have been part of the noble part of society and lived a normal life at daytime and raped women at nighttime. He is kind of a prototype of some parts of our society, where reputable people have also a dark and dangerous side. There are people like Ted Bundy or Jeffrey Dahmer out there killing people without knowing why. "Suffer or Endure" [is] also about this type of person who is frustrated because he can't get the one he wants and one day he's just taking her. All these people exist and they can cause immense suffering to other people, but looking away and not talking about [it] won't stop them. So, we use heavy topics that we write lyrics about because that's what we see everyday and it fits more to heavy music then a song about love. Maybe we'll write a love song someday. If we think it's necessary, then we'll do it.

What DO you feel to be the most pressing message(s) you're trying to convey?
As it always was, we are very concerned with the suffering animals have to go through every day. Veganism is a big part of this band. I can't believe that humans do such cruel and unjust things to animals! There is no reason for that! Animals are so beautiful and they are a magical part of our whole existence, why do we torture and kill millions of them every day? This question leads to other main topics – the topics of hate and hypocrisy. It makes me angry to see animals getting slaughtered and I can feel nothing else than contempt for people like butchers, vivisectionists, or hunters. I hate them all! And this hate is reflected in our lyrics. I hate all this ignorance in this world. People care that their car is clean and that they wear the right clothes, but they beat their wives and watch child-porn. That is disgusting and it makes me sick! They don't give a fuck about the animals that stand behind the sausage they eat and that makes me angry! And then there's the hypocrisy you can see every day. Like I said before, there are people who are respected by everyone, who have a house, a good job, and money, and at night they go out raping or killing! And our human race is full of these two-faced persons, but society is much more concerned when their TV set is broken! That is ridiculous! On the one hand they send some animal liberation activist to jail for seven years because they liberated some animals and therefore destroyed some material things, on the other hand they send a rapist to jail for three years because he was drunk when he did it! Nobody is asking what happens to the woman he raped. Her whole life has changed forever, she'll never be the same again! It seems that money is worth more than health or a human life. Or those who love their dogs more than anything else (which is quite all right), but then they are eating meat. That is hypocritical! Both the dog and the meat is (and was) an animal! So, veganism and animal liberation are big parts of our lyrics, but also the sick and twisted behavior of our society, which we are all part of, that makes things even worse.

From your first EP, 'Captive in the Room of the Conspirator', to 2002's 'Antagonist' and now to this second album, how would you say you've progressed as songwriters and as a band?
Oh, we progressed a lot I think, and I hope you can hear this. As we started, we didn't really know where we wanted to go musically and as a band. We had so many influences and best of all we wanted to combine all these different styles. And this uncertainty you can hear on our early recordings – even on 'Antagonist' we didn't really know where we wanted to go with the band. We still have a lot of different influences and listen to a lot of different music, but after we put out 'Antagonist' we grew more and more together as a band. We were on tour a lot, we had to make a lot of very important decisions, and we went through a lot of great things but also a lot of very bad things together. That all stabilized us as a band. As we recorded 'Endorsed by Hate', it was the first time we knew what we wanted. With this album came a stable line-up and we played almost every day in every fucking corner of Europe. So, the band are those people who you hang around with most of your time. I see these guys more often than my family, which is very hard sometimes, and you are sick to death of each other from time to time, but on the other side, it is the thing that means the most to us all! And all this led to the stabilization of Maroon as a band and also had influence on the music. In the beginning we looked at what others may expect of us and this sometimes led to some wrong decisions. Now we've realized we have to be satisfied and we don't hear what other people say that much anymore. Of course it's sometimes important to take advice from some good friends, but musically we have to like what we're doing. If you're not satisfied with what you're doing, you'll become bad in what you're doing and people will realize that. I think last year was the most important year for Maroon. We signed our contract with Century Media, which marks the next big step in our history.

We wanna know! What IS a Maroon show like?!
Did you already make a visit to hell? If so, you can imagine what a Maroon show is like! It's just intensity, passion, and blood, sweat, and tears! We developed a lot since we play so many days of the year, so I think our live show is always getting better. But the audience is always a very important part of a show. I mean, we give always 100 percent, but the audience has always an effect on your show! But mostly our fans are just awesome. They make all our shows so special, and if they go crazy we go crazy even more! There are people moshing, people singing along, and people diving. We've always been a live band. Even in the beginning when we were very bad live and hadn't enough experience, we always tried our best, and it's hard to go on with your show when you realize that nobody cares about you. But this gave us the name of being a great live band. The best is to come to one of our shows and decide for yourself!

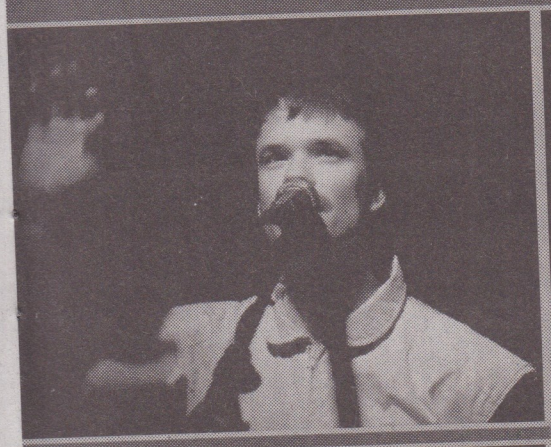
What would you like people to know about Maroon?
I want to put aside all the rumors. We are NOT intolerant. We don't beat people who are smoking or eating meat, and everyone is welcome at our shows, no matter if he is straight-edge or not! Come see us and create your own opinion and DON'T BELIEVE IN FUCKING RUMORS!! And our drummer Nick is solo, so any girl out there who wants to meet him should send us an e-mail!

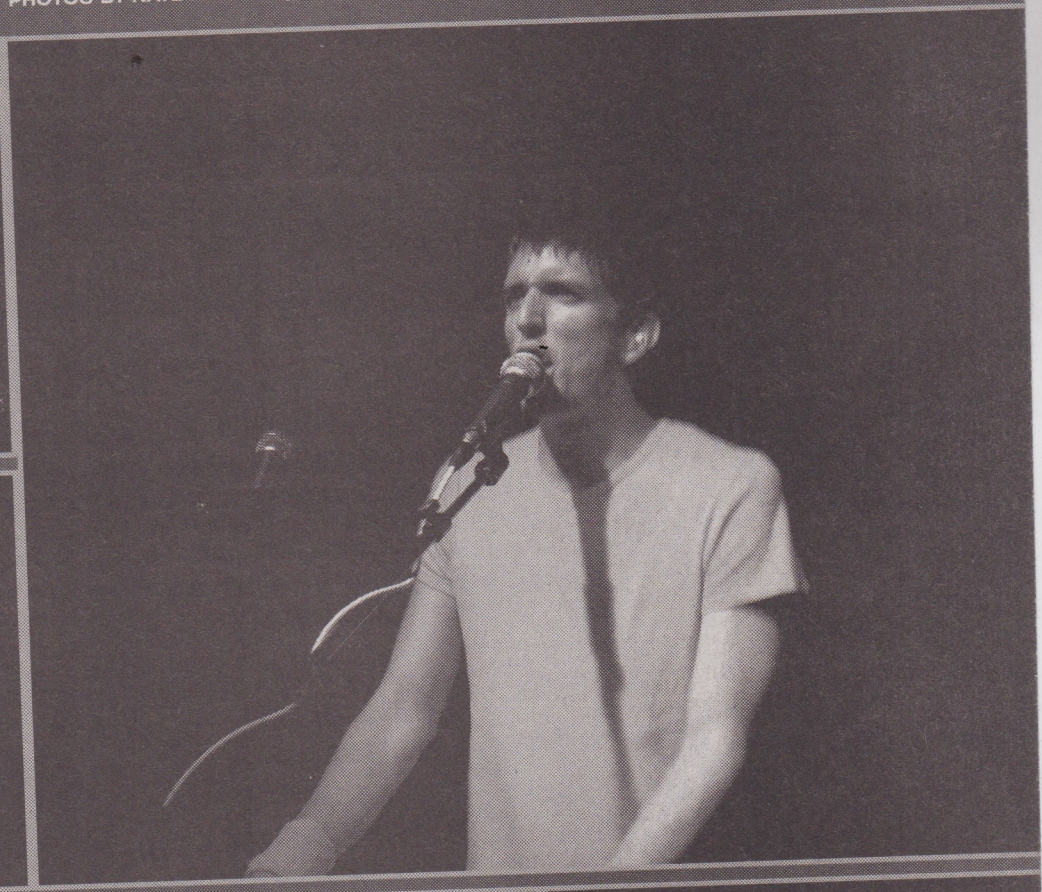
Anything you'd like to add?
Thank you very much for doing this interview; it was a pleasure! Thanx for reading it! Special thank you to all the people from the States who wrote us and stood by us the last seven years. Hello to all our fans there, hope to see you on the road soon! Rest in Peace Dimebag Darrell. We won't forget you! VIVA HATE!

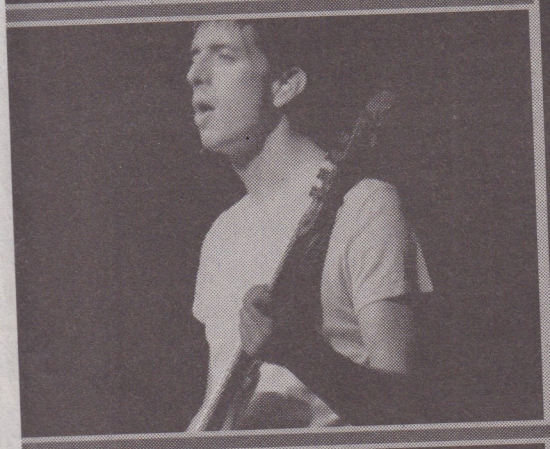
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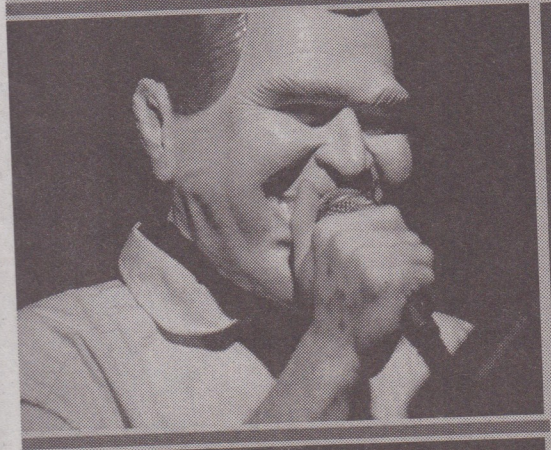
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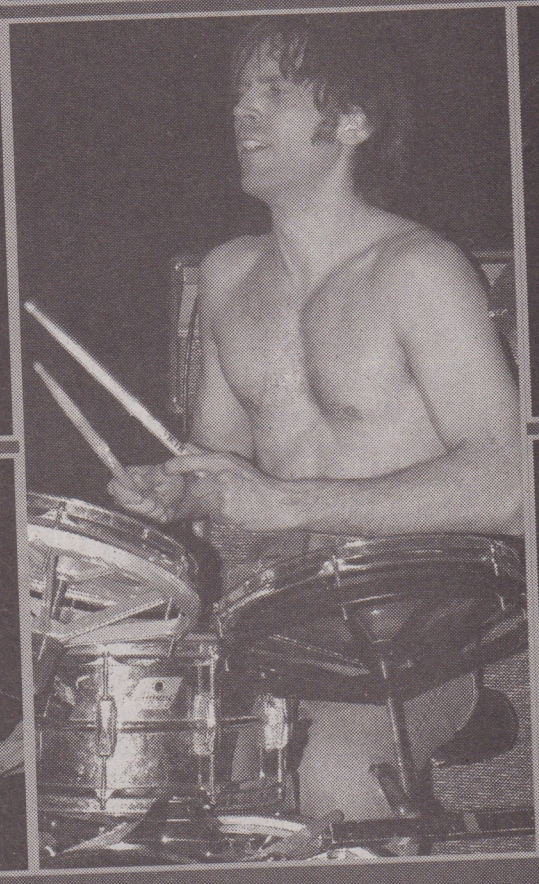
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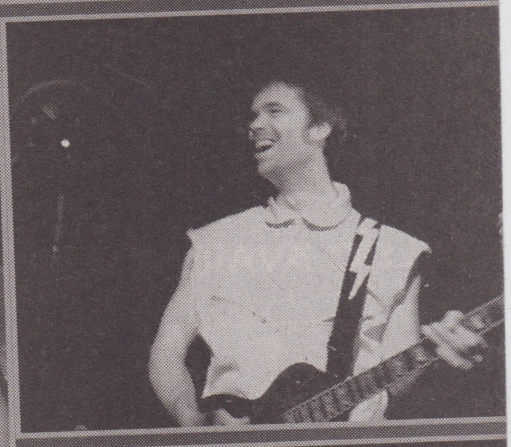


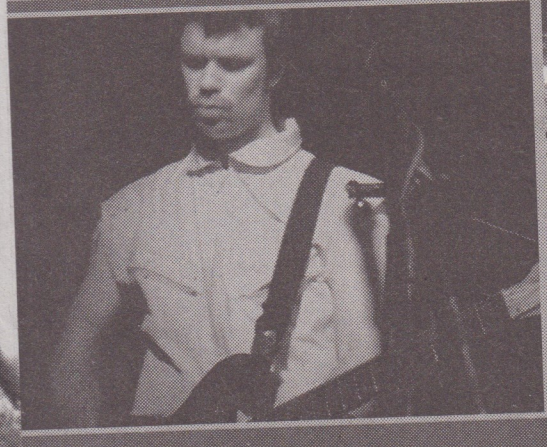


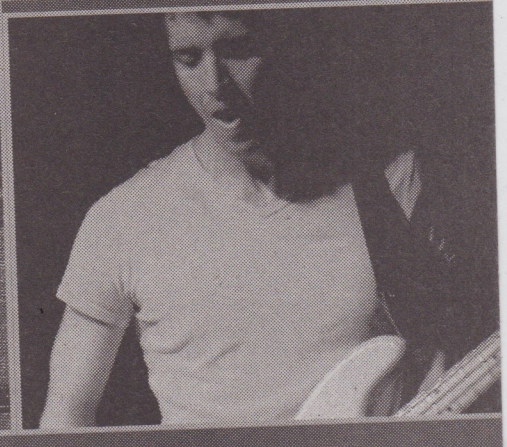






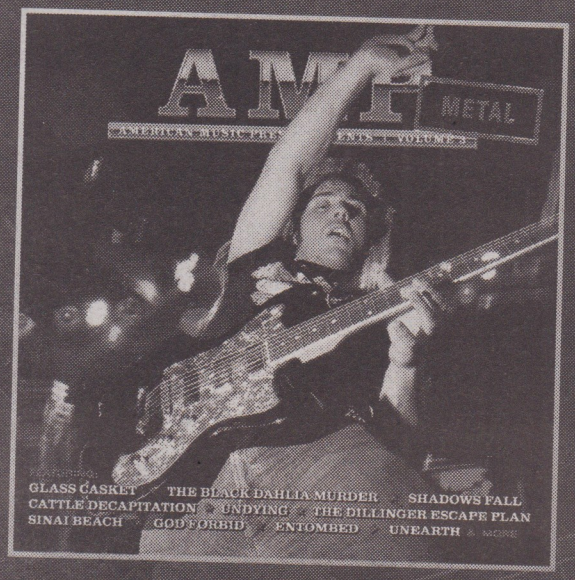






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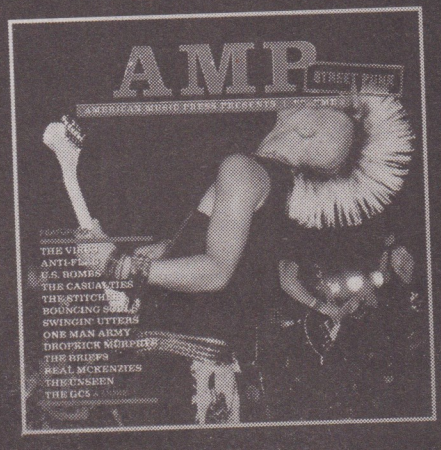
AMP POP PUNK

AMERICAN MUSIC PRESS PRESENTS | VOLUME 4



25 TRACKS FROM:

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THE DEMONICS
ENEMY YOU
THE GAMITS
GOIN' PLACES
GOLDENBOY
THE GROOVIE GHOULIES
THE HIGHSCHOOL DROPOUTS
THE HUNTINGTONS
THE JOHN STAMOS PROJECT
THE LILLINGTONS
THE MANGES
MCRACKINS
THE METHADONES
MORAL CRUX
THE MR. T EXPERIENCE
THE PROZACS
THE QUEERS
RETARDED
SQUIRTGUN
TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET
THE TRAVOLTAS
THE UNLOVABLES
THE ZATOPECS



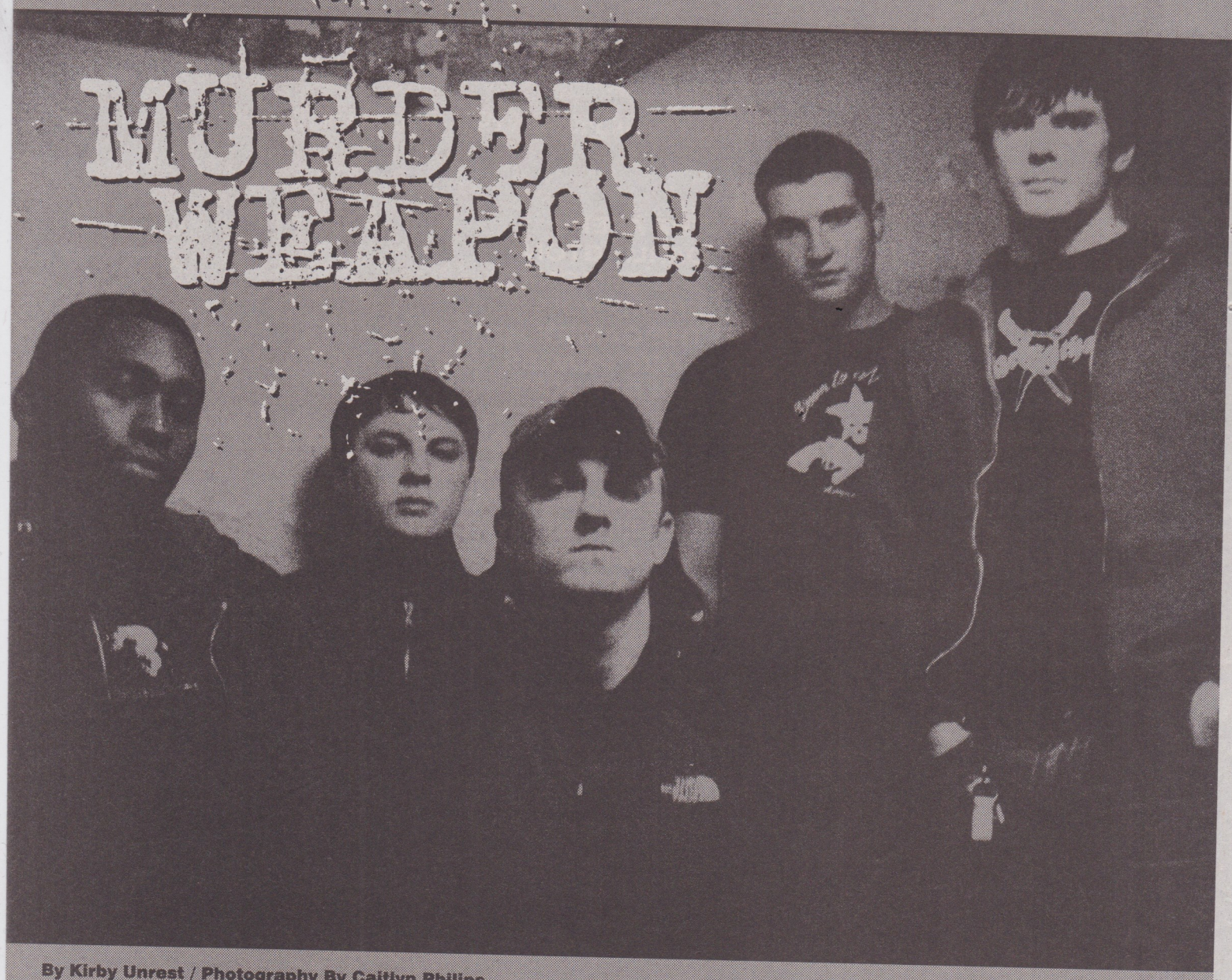
AMP PRESENTS... VOLUME 2: STREET PUNK

26 TRACKS FROM: ANTI-FLAG, THE BODIES, BOUNCING SOULS, THE BRIEFS, THE BRIGGS, THE CASUALTIES, DEFIANCE, DROPKICK MURPHYS, THE FORGOTTEN, THE GC5, THE HUNNS, THE LANCASTERS, LARS FREDERIKSEN AND THE BASTARDS, LOWER CLASS BRATS, THE NEW YORK REL-X, ONE MAN ARMY, REAL MCKENZIES, STREET DOGS, THE STITCHES, SWINGIN' UTTERS, THROWRAG, TOXIC NARCOTIC, UNION 13, THE UNSEEN, U.S. BOMBS, THE VIRUS

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MURDER WEAPON



By Kirby Unrest / Photography By Caitlyn Philips

When did Murder Weapon begin, and why is the band coming to an end?
Murder Weapon started a few years ago. We're breaking up due to simply having busy lives outside of the band. We all work full time, some of us are in school. It's hard to keep the band going with such busy schedules.

Is anyone moving on to other projects besides existing ones (i.e. Down To Nothing, etc.)?
Dave and Groater are both in Down To Nothing. I think that our other guitarist Ryan is trying to do another band. I'm sure Rashod will do something in the near future as well. I'd like to sing for another band at some point, we'll see though.

Will there be material released posthumously?
Doubt it.

Murder Weapon definitely had a more "old school" sound than DTN or even Dead Serious. It seems very rooted in old NYHC and Boston stuff (CroMags, Sheer Terror, DYS, SSD etc) than any of the "88" bands or the more modern updates of the youth crew sound. Was that your intent?
Absolutely. That's my favorite type of hardcore. We wanted to play music in the vein of the NYHC.

What were your goals when you started Murder Weapon and now that it's over, do you feel that you've accomplished them?
To some extent, yes. We never really had the desire to tour full time or



anything like that. We were just trying to have fun. I wish we had done a little bit more touring, though. And recording wise, we should have put something else out. Our newer material is really the best shit we've ever written. I wish we could have recorded it.

Your last show has quite the line up: Righteous Jams, Mental, RnR. Are there the bands you had hoped to have with you for the final MW show?
Well, Cold World is playing too. They're one of my favorite bands out right now. There's a ton of bands that I would have loved to play a last show with, but it's no big deal. The bands that we're friends with and that have helped us out know who they are.

Do you have any special surprises planned?
No. Some limited merch, though.

The layout to your CD was very "crime scene" based. Was the due to the band name or something you had planned for awhile? Are you interested in criminology?
Yeah, the layout had a crime theme going on. It wasn't really what we anticipated, but we liked it regardless. I actually study criminal justice in school, but that didn't have anything to do with it.



How are things in the Virginia scene these days? Lot of good bands going right now?
It's alright. Not as many shows as there used to be, though. The whole band lives in Richmond which has always had a pretty strong scene. A lot of new faces keep poppin up which is great. Down To Nothing is huge here. So is Cast Aside, those bands are the shit. Some other bands coming up are ending it quick, permanent, worlds end, high stakes. There's a lot of potential with those bands.

What do you do outside of music? Work? School?
I work full time and go to school part time. I should be graduating next spring with a degree in criminal justice. When I'm not working i just enjoy hanging out with my friends, working out. Nothing crazy.

Out of all the tracks Murder Weapon did, which was your favorite and why?
I enjoyed playing "Burnt Bridges." It seemed to be a crowd favorite. It was written right after one of my best friends got stabbed. So the lyrics really meant a lot to me.

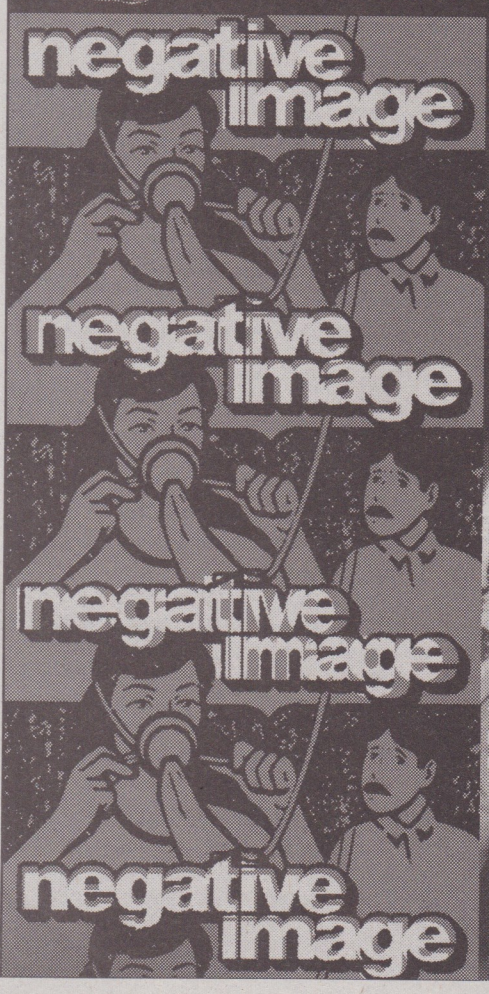
I saw that Internal Affairs is trying to get on a Jones Soda bottle. I think you guys should have gone for this. Now that's a legacy... Ha-ha.
Internal Affairs deserves to be on more than a soda bottle. That band is the shit. ↖

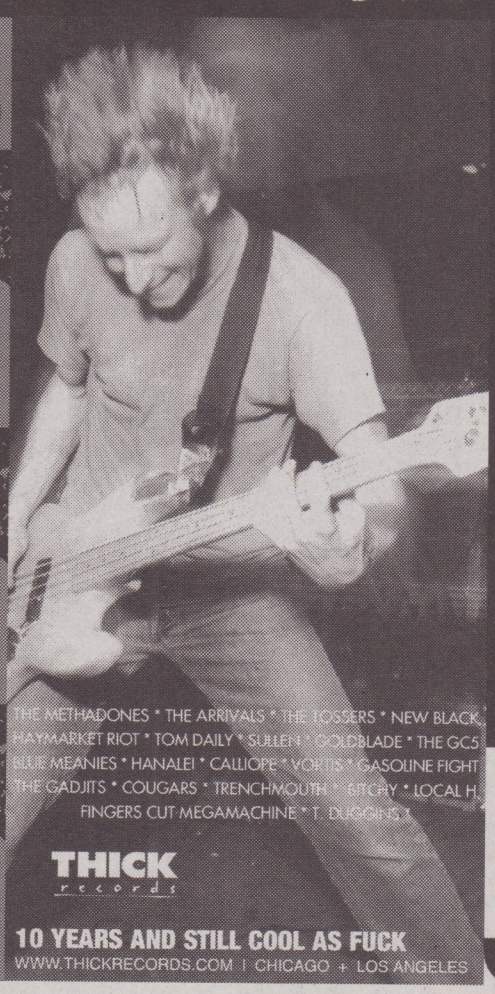


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JACK RABID

2004 Overview: Election Hangover, Drecky Commercial Pop, Fraudulent "Live" Performances, Hopeful Independent Music Scene, and the Return of Political Comment and Old Punk/Postpunk Masters!

For this writer 2004 was the year music was totally overshadowed by politics, yet the election result only confirmed the alienation from mainstream America that my musical taste has long suggested. While I listened to and enjoyed just as many albums, singles, and live concerts as any other year, my head was 100 times more consumed with the election, as if my cultural obsessions were mere amusements. And the music I love, while still affecting to me, might as well have been made on Mars or Jupiter for all its relevance to Main Street U.S.A.

Watching George Bush and Karl Rove win, and the farce of their promises to work with the other side in this bitterly divided country (the political equivalent of Lucy swearing to Charlie Brown that she will let him kick that football this time) just exacerbated my now quarter-decade feeling of isolation from my non-urban countrymen. No wonder I moved from the affluent suburban "paradise" of Summit, New Jersey about 10 minutes after I graduated from high school to the big, bad, grimy, crime-ridden, poverty-stricken, crammed and busted New York City of the first Ed Koch administration-and I've never had a half-second's desire to move back.

But I will save further ranting on this awful thing that dominated my head for a future editorial. You want the year in music here; I will give it you, with the caveat that it was the secondary thing both in my head and to happen this year.

Looking over the Top 10 sellers, this past year was dominated as ever by suburban mall rat music that didn't mean a "rat"'s ass to me. The year's lone blockbuster, Usher's *Confessions* (just short of 8 million sold) didn't really register to me. I'm a huge fan of so much incredible R&B from the late 1940s (when R&B meant the New Orleans boogie woogie of Professor Longhair and the young Fats Domino, early Doo Wop groups like the Orioles, and true pioneers such as Big Joe Turner and Screaming Jay Hawkins) to somewhere in the mid 1970s (later singles by the funkified Temptations and Isley Brothers and the outrageously soulful and sexy Marvin Gaye). But R&B hasn't done a damn thing for me since; it's just way too slick, overdone and oversung for me. Ditto modern Country & Western and its trio of Kenny Chesney, Gretchen Wilson, and Tim McGraw's impressive 3, 2.9, and 2.7 million sold of, respectively, *When the Sun Goes Down*, *Here For the Party*, and *Live Like You Were Dying*. I don't hear any heir to the gutsy, desperate greatness of Jimmie Rodgers, the senior Hank Williams, Johnny Cash, George Jones, Patsy Kline, Gene Autry, or Tex Ritter in this good ole boy pabulum, although Wilson is at least palatable. And what little I heard of Maroon 5 and their 2.7 million units of *Songs About Jane* sounded like the kind of funky white soul that sells well on college campuses but has always left me feeling zip. And heck, I never even heard Arkansas's former Christian rock group Evanesence and their *Fallen* (2.6 million)-not even sure where, outside of Ben Affleck movies, one would encounter that in NYC. (Maybe that's a good thing; usually I'm bombarded with all the popular music I despise in restaurants, cafes, and other public spaces.) Who knows, maybe they're good, but I'm skeptical.

Likewise, I've little to say about Eminem, as I've never liked rap at all. But it was great to see him doing the anti-war song "Mosh" on *Saturday Night Live* and to think this was the hit from his new 3.5 million selling *Encore*. Rap will always have value (even if it's not my flavor) when it makes the audience think, and Eminem certainly made me do just that by plainly spelling out his distaste. If not exactly Bob Dylan's withering "Masters of War," and if devoid of Mathers' usual humor, it was nevertheless good to see him get off the obsessive subject of himself and address the larger world. And from what I've heard from my friends who closely follow this genre, there was far more of this sort of direct social commentary in hip-hop in general in 2004 than in recent years. A good development that will hopefully spill over to the other music scenes.

Of course, it was asserted that Eminem lip-synched his way through his performance, much as Ashlee Simpson was caught red handed doing in October on her way to selling 2.5 million of her pap-ridden *Autobiography*. The furor over this travesty followed a similar flap a few weeks prior caused by the surprisingly mouthy Elton John, who drunkenly spoke up off the cuff for the voiceless millions and condemned Madonna's worthless "Best Live Act" award in *Q* magazine. I laughed pretty damn hard the day I read his diatribe against someone he admitted was his friend: ""Anyone who lip-synchs in public on stage when you pay 75 pounds [$134] to see them should be shot. Madonna, best [expletive] live act? Fuck off. Since when has lip-synching been live? That's me off her [expletive] Christmas card list but do I give a toss? No." And even though he publicly apologized later, and correctly noted that the teenage pop tarts abuse this vile practice much more extensively, he pointedly refused to retract his accusation. Hah! Right on Elton! I haven't liked your sappy music since your first half-dozen decent LPs, but you've got my admiration for that one!

(And note to the ubiquitous Simpson apologists; it's called "Saturday Night Live," not "Saturday Night Taped and Dull"; if it's OK for Simpson to just mime up there while prancing around looking all pretty and pouty, then why not let all the actors on the show just tape their performances during the week over and over until they get them just perfect, too? Maybe if record companies would go back to signing singers who can actually sing like they once did for a half-century-perish the thought-instead of putting all their considerable marketing money muscle behind celebrities, sex symbols, dancers, and movie stars, this wouldn't be such a continual controversy/problem over whether their "artists" are actually performing "live!").

The whole ludicrous issue just underscores what I've been arguing for over two decades, ever since synthetic drums started ruining production values in the early 1980s. The more music relies on machines and sampling than obviously the less live it is, not only on stage but also in the studio, and that's just plain bad. In a sojourn to New Orleans over New Year's I noted that even baleful cover bands on the Bourbon Street strip manage to play live instruments, at least allowing for the off chance that something unusual might happen. And just around the corner some infinitely preferable tourist jazz hangouts like Preservation Hall and Maison Bourbon feature five-to-seven-piece ensembles that routinely feed off each other's playing to form a very unfettered whole every night. Why have we mechanized away that interplay between musicians? Even between a singer and his or her own playing, there's so little actual humanity left in popular music. What we're left with, once again, is so many singing, dancing, jiggling robots, such as Britney and Ashlee, running the whole gamut between racy cheerleader and actual bump-and grind. They may move the masses with those soft-porn moves, but it's all-sizzle and no steak.

That leaves Nora Jones and the #2 LP of the year, *Feels Like Home*, at 3.8 million. I've nothing against her except that she's kind of bland for such a phenomenon. We can do so much better. (I wish those 3.8 million people had bought Sam Phillips instead. Her *A Boot and a Shoe* was smart, sexy, vulnerable, knowing, strong, sensual, funny, and mature all at once.) And last but not least, the #10 LP was *Now 16; Now That's What I Call Music!* at 2.5 million. What a laugh.

So much for what the people break out their $20 bills for. Ho hum. There once was a time when popular music was amazing, in a far, far away decade known as the 1960s. But I'm betting that if any of the superstars of that multi-genre, talent-laden decade came along today they wouldn't get signed or promoted or played by any myopic major labels. Fortunately there's more to life these days than the majors and their sown-up radio playlists with their Clear Channel friends-of-convenience. Chances are my favorites of the '60s would all get signed to deals on much smaller independent labels if they came along now. Judging from their current rosters, I could see the Beatles and Beach Boys signing to Sub Pop, the Byrds to spinART, the Rolling Stones to Merge, the Kinks to Anti, Buffalo Springfield to Bloodshot, Simon & Garfunkel to Nettwerk, Bob Dylan to Vagrant, the Mamas & the Papas to Barsuk, Paul Revere & the Raiders and The Yardbirds to Gearhead, and The Who to Matador (and maybe the Troggs and The Animals to Epitaph), while Joni Mitchell would get signed to indie-in-spirit Nonesuch. And maybe all the great Motown, Atlantic, and Stax artists like Mary Wells, Wilson Pickett, and Otis Redding would be signing to today's black indies or hipper white labels with similar major distribution. Even Solomon Burke, one of the true greats of that era, put out an LP on Anti!!! (Too bad that didn't sell 8 million instead of Usher; it was a much better R&B/soul LP.)

Really, this is no joke. Perhaps the most missed development in 2004 was

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the unprecedented emerging market share of such indie labels. The media seized on one 2004 sales storyline, typified by the following headline from *ABC News*: "U.S. Music Sales Break Losing Streak in 2004." This story by Ed Christman began, "U.S. album sales in 2004 were up for the first time in four years." True, after album sales were down a harsh 2.9% in 2001, a whopping 10.7% more in 2002, and another 3.6% in 2003, they did manage a rather modest 1.6% increase in 2004. But that wasn't because majors sold more records for a change. On the contrary, their slipshod monopolies marked by conservative, rotten taste in A&R sold even less in 2004, if you actually dig through the figures provided in Christman's article. Here's the real story the headlines missed: It was the indie labels that picked up the slack. Show me another year in the last 30 where independent labels sold more albums than one of the big major families, which should be even more powerful now that they're down to only four conglomerates after yet another giant merge. But in 2004 indies racked up an astonishing 17.4% market share, beaten only by behemoths Universal (29.6%) and Sony (28.5%) and well ahead of the other two giants, Warners (14.7%) and EMI (9.9%). Subtracting the indie sector's 1/6 share, the four majors actually sold less albums for the fourth straight year, which is why they are still merging and shedding staff right and left despite the erroneous "good" news that their slide has "stopped." The only reason that major executives can still smile, is that they finally embraced downloads in a big way, and found their coffers bulging from the more than 141 million songs bought over the internet via this fashion. At around a buck a pop, that's $141 million smackers with no shipping and retail costs straight to the customer. But while they're selling disposable songs for kids with tiny attention spans, independent labels are selling LP experiences to mature music fans that crave something more real.

What does this mean for the future? True creative artists can find sympathetic homes and be nurtured and supported, and we're starting to see the overwhelming fruits of their being allowed to make the records they want to instead of three decades by abusive major labels who insisted they mold into whatever the new crap commercial sound was, and dropped them if they refused. I've haven't seen soulful singer-songwriters and more unusual song-oriented bands doing this well since the late 1970s, when the Elvis Costellos, Nick Lowes, Graham Parkers, Buzzcocks, and Cheap Tricks all made it to cult fame.

To wit, following up on the promising indie American pop sound of 2003 (especially the emergence of The Shins and the continuing brilliance of Death Cab for Cutie and the Pernice Brothers), 2004 once again produced a string of pop gems and hard-rocking goodies that also (and here's the kicker) enjoyed a surprising wave of support from the nation's rock press. In particular, on the brand-new artist side, the interesting Arcade Fire, the totally accomplished Rouge Wave, the gifted ex-Zumpano A.C. Newman, the punky, spunky Visqueen, the L.A.-by-way-of Toronto's Broken Social Scene offshoot Metric, and others gobbled up well-deserved print and sold decently. (In contrast, there were very few brand new major acts that really drew my and other critics' attention and excitement, aside perhaps from the post-Radiohead brood pop of Scotland's Snow Patrol.) Another pop concoction, Brent Arnold & the Spheres also roundly satisfied, as did the sophomore return of Hidden Cameras' effervescent bubbling. And if big stories Franz Ferdinand and Interpol are perhaps too retro for their own good (I remember seeing their much better influences live two decades ago, the Gang of Four and Chameleons, respectively), they're both completely superb anyway! (Less so the Jam-loving Futureheads, though they knocked out people live.) Any way you shake it, their success has given more legitimacy to the alternative and independent rock that has been the ignored bastard child of the all-engulfing oligarchic majors since I was in junior high. And so more young musicians are being encouraged to find their own path, knowing that such warm press support now readily exists, rather than mimic the stars.

Hey, notice how many decent bigger magazines there are now, after years of being stuck with rancid Rolling Stone and suck-up Spin? Between *Magnet*, *Under the Radar*, *Paste*, *Harp*, *Amplifier*, *Skyscraper*, and others (and hopefully *Big Takeover*), there has never been so many well-distributed, good-looking, intelligently written, non-smarmy, informative, and multi-taste places to find out about so much great music that still remains "under the radar" for your average suburban, exurbian, and rural American. Between this and the broadening ability to listen to decent radio via the net or via satellite, and more and more people are not only reading about more interesting artists with something to say, but hearing them as well. I've never seen anything like it since a brief time around 1979 when it looked like music with some spunk really was taking over the radio (what a tease that was) and music mags.

Indeed, how great it feels to finally lay waste to a 20-year complaint that music journalists are wholly out of touch with the remarkable music being made outside of the putrid pop charts!!! Having been a broken record with that lament for so long, no one is more relieved and happy than I.)

And it wasn't all just newer faces, either, that made this past year's music worthwhile. 2004 was also filled with amazing records from returning veterans who did some of their very best work ever. If you like punk rock, you had to be thrilled with what might prove to be Leatherface's final LP, the typically hair-raising, smash-riffs and gigantic heart-on-sleeve singing by Frankie N.W. Stubbs on *Dog Disco*. And although Bad Religion made an atypically uneven record in the hard-hitting *The Empire Strikes First*, it was my lyric sheet of the year by far (especially the title track and the positively searing "Let Them Eat War"); a handful of truly brilliant songs like the radio hit "Los Angeles is Burning" couldn't stay off my turntable. And heck, how many people missed what an incredible LP The Descendents turned in this year, their first in eight years and their best since their debut *Milo Goes to College* (or side two of *I Don't Want to Grow Up*) two decades ago? *Cool to Be You* was chock-full of caffeinated rockers with sublime harmonies and Milo Auckerman's wondrous singing. How could anyone pass this up? Or, if you wanted the oldest of "old style," proto-punk, what a delight it was to hear Rocket From the Tombs go into Richard Lloyd of Television's home studio and finally bang out proper studio versions of their incredible 1975 pre-Dead Boys and pre-Pere Ubu set-with Lloyd ably filling in on lead guitar for the excellent Peter Laughner-on *Rocket Redux*?

Likewise, even if you scorn heavy metal like I do, you had to be floored by the shocking return to greatness of the new Motorhead LP *Inferno*. What a colossal jolt, what a thunderous earthquake with punk overtones this mother is! Probably their best record ever, and their most powerful since the days of Iron Fist. No other LP this year caught my mood of rage and anger over the endless war accompanied by endless fear and my outright unhappiness with 60,608,582 American voters that apparently had their heads in the sand and their brains in their ass than this raging "inferno." And they also had the best advice I heard on how to get over it and deal with it, especially after all the lame whining about moving to Canada instead of staying and fighting: "Be a man/Fix the glitch/Just remember life's a bitch." (Did the Republicans move to Mexico after their 1964 Barry Goldwater debacle?!)

If the singer-songwriter thing is your bag, it's not too late to check out Ron Sexsmith's *Retriever*. He hasn't been this moving since 1997's Other Songs-you want to cry when you hear post-breakup songs like "Dandelion Wine." And who is making more interested gilded pop these days than Scotland's Delgados, whose *Universal Audio* once again pushed the envelope of what you can do with intricately arranged, lush, yet entirely tuneful and heartfelt guitar pop? And for the folk-popper in each of us, I was surprised by and fell in love with Rachel Goswell's light touch on her first solo LP *Waves Are Universal* (having contributed so much with her lead vocals for Slowdive and her backing vocals for Mojave 3), a really quiet but pretty little record. And maybe Brian Wilson's new version of *Smile* sounds rather thin and badly misses his two dead brothers, Al Jardine, and Bruce Johnston (but surely not Mike Love!) in comparison to the original 1966-1967 versions of these songs on the Beach Boys box set. But it was still a marvel to hear all those old fragments arranged into a cohesive concept LP that did turn out to be much more than the sum of its scattered parts! What a great LP that would have been in 1967, perfectly bridging *Pet Sounds* and *Sgt. Pepper*; I will soon make good on my vow to construct a version of *Smile* using the old recordings from the box set and bootlegs, now that Wilson has laid down the blueprint of how it fits together.

And in a hint of 2004's other amazing development, if more angular and unusual postpunk is what you go for, two of the very best LPs of the year were made by two bands that has been broken up and thought lost forever for well over a decade. American Music Club's *Love Songs For Patriots* was mesmerizing in its portrait of a totally different, more liberal and tolerant America. If I thought about any songs this year more than "Patriot Heart," a burlesque-driven send-up of John Ashcroft and his odious Patriot Act, by way of a Columbus Ohio pub crawl of male strip joints set to strident jazz-rock and crashing piano and guitars, and "Ladies and Gentlemen, It's Time" (what Mark Eitzel thinks

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President Bush should have said to the nation after 9/11, and boy is he right), I can't think of them. Likewise, what a delight to see Boston's Mission of Burma end a 21-year absence in the studio with the equally surprising *ONoffOn*, which not only brought back their idiosyncratic post-punk surprises in arrangements, time changes, and punchy riffs, but also pulled no punches with their rampant dislike of the current administration and the alternately cowed and jingoistic mood of the times on songs such as "Fake Blood."

Ah yes, that word "comeback." Now that bands such as The Strokes, Interpol, and Franz Ferdinand have introduced the pleasures of the post-punk late 70s/early '80s to those still interested in rock 'n' roll, maybe it's no surprising that so many of the original bands of that genre have returned out of blue the last few years. The whole rock world was clearly abuzz over the Pixies return in 2004, twice as popular as they were when they were the biggest cult band of their time a decade ago. But don't stop there. Looking over my live show viewing of 2004, I completely thrilled to AMC, Mission of Burma, Trash Can Sinatras, Television, Undertones, X, D.O.A., Devo, Effigies, Weirdos, and for the first-time ever, my holy trinity of The MC5, Iggy & the Stooges, and New York Dolls!!!! (And going back even further, Arthur Lee's '00s version of Love was once again the best concert I saw all year, even blowing away the once-genius Zombies on the same bill.) I further had to turn down the chance to travel a little to see similar shows by the Avengers, Rezillos, Buzzcocks, U.K. Subs, Penetration, and the Damned. I don't think Mr. Peabody (*Bullwinkle & Rocky*'s cartoon dog who, Daily Show scribe Mo Rocca reveals in his recent book *All the President's Pets*, is still alive and well and working for UPI's Helen Thomas on the White House press beat!) ever conjured up living history in his time machine for the gasping Sherman half as well. And as 2005 dawned, news that came that the mighty Gang of Four are also coming back, all four originals for the first time in two decades, and that Franz Ferdinand has talked the Fire Engines into reforming to open for them! With all these originals returning and playing for much, much bigger crowds than they ever did before (especially Burma and The Pixies, though the later was starting to turn the corner when they grew bitter and split), and so many young musicians digging the greater possibilities in so many different directions, things are looking up. (Too bad about Guided By Voices, though. I will really miss them. Ten years from now, people will be amazed by how many great songs they managed in just 12 years.)

One last development in music helped my disposition somewhat in such a downer year for the future of our nation. As noted in this space last year, more and more artists have finally woken up and realized that it's important to sing about what's going on around us and what's being done in our name. The escapist nature of music throughout much of the later 1980s, most of the 1990s, and the first three years of this decade really ticked me off, having grown up on the Clash, Sex Pistols, Avengers, Weirdos Dead Kennedys, Dils, Effigies, Bad Brains, Neurotics, and Stiff Little Fingers. I've never felt closer to music than when it speaks to me in this way. And though I will always enjoy songs about relationships, there's been precious little attempt to speak to the social issues of our lives since those days, outside of the occasional well-prized Billy Bragg, New Model Army, etc. It's damn well time to start again. Last year I noted that it took the Iraq war to knock a few bands out of their stupor, in a way that the mere stolen election of 2000 and right wing Bush administration hadn't in 2001 and 2002 (despite all the predictions by left-leaning rock critics in the *Village Voice* year end Pazz & Jop poll of 2001). Now, with a new election year, Eminem is joined by the tardy but welcome Green Day (both thankfully spoke up to their huge youth audiences). The Poster Children added an EP of well chosen covers on the subject to their own forays on last year's fine LP, while the Descendents countered the lame accusation of "blaming America" with their shamed "Merican", singing, brilliantly, "I come from the land of Ben Franklin/Twain and Poe and Walt Whitman/Otis Redding, Ellington," then adding, "But it's the land of the slaves and the Klu Klux Klan/The Haymarket Riot, Joe McCarthy, Vietnam/Sickest joke I know/But you don't wanna listen, don't want to understand/So finish up your drink and go home." That, in a nutshell, is how I feel about this country right now. Remember, the past isn't the past, it's being repeated again and again in the present, and we're all falling for the same deadly and despicable traps once again.

(Note on this subject: The election-timed pro-Kerry Springsteen and R.E.M. tour apparently didn't really produce the elusive youth vote it was designed to... perhaps because kids don't really like Springsteen and R.E.M. all that much as spokesmen for their lives! But to be fair, if even Eminem and Green Day can't get the college-aged to get off their lazy fricken asses and pull a lever once every four years-for the record, I voted when I was 18 and 22, as well as ever since-then I don't think any musician really could. Still, if more speak up, maybe it will eventually dawn on the kids that it's their generation that's dying overseas and that will have to pay, in both money and broken lives, for any and all bad decisions we make today. Maybe that will finally erode some of their lamentable apathy.)

So if music was secondary to me this year, it was nevertheless more inspiring on many levels than it has been in some time. And with the positive commercial and artistic developments mentioned above, it may prove to be healthier than it has been in years. OK, as I predicted a few years ago in these very *Amp* pages saying so, the CD may truly be as doomed as well-missed vinyl, as the aforementioned single downloads replace my beloved albums as the musical art form of popular choice: It's telling to note that of all the computer downloads in 2004, compared to those 141 million individual song units sold this year, only 5.5 million actual LPs were downloaded that way. And if so, that will be a terrible shame. But otherwise, independent labels may be poised to pick up the slack by selling to people who still care about the more ambitious long form, (whether purchased on a compact disc or downloaded whole. And they also have so much more inspired music to sell to those of us who, to quote The Chills' old chestnut (they also returned in 2004!) "Heavenly Pop Hit," "still want it."

So chin up, all you fellow *Amp* readers and artistic music fans! Here's to either a better Bush adminstration than any of us have any reason to hope for from 2001-2005, or more likely, better times in 2008! Hey, even the Brits sent the Thatcherite Tories packing with their tails between their legs eventually, didn't they? And they didn't have term limits to aid them...



BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME

LIVE AT THE POUND, SAN FRANCISCO, CA / PHOTOGRAPHY BY HYUN LEE















Reviewers: (MC) Mitchy-Poo Cardwell, (RK) Ramsey Kanaan, (STM) Sammy The Mick, (JC) Jimi Cheetah, (DM) The Reverend Dominic Moresi, (LD) Laura Davis, (FM) Falin Minoru, (MWB) Matt "Windbreaker" Cote, (AW) Alan Wright, (TT) Tars Tarkas.

7 SECONDS
"Take It Back, Take It On, Take It Over!" CD
17 new tracks, that pick up where they left off with the live LP. Steve Youth is looking alot older.. actually, they all are, but they stick with the early anthemic sounds, and eschew the emo. Surprisingly solid and fresh sounding. Fans will dig it, as will those who weren't even born when "99 Red Balloons" was the live fave... (RK)
(SideOneDummy, www.sideonedummy.com)



999
"Slam" CD
Demos (good quality ones too) recorded by the band in the early 80s. Most of the songs ended up on their "Biggest Prize In Sport" and "Concrete" Lps. A couple were used as b-sides, and there are a half a dozen previously unreleased tracks for the completist. For the fans only, for sure. They were a great band, and if you haven't already, pick up any of their early full-lengths first. (RK)
(Overground Records, PO Box 1NW, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE99 1NW, UK)

9 SHOCKS TERROR
self-titled CD
I love this band. I've always thought of them as a less dogmatic BORN AGAINST. Awesome crusty punky hardcore with a very obvious Japanese influence. Image a cross-pollination of FILTH with FUCK ON THE BEACH. The downside is that there are only a few songs here as it is the cd version of a seven inch. The upside is that they atone for this sin by provided a second disc here which is a dvd (some sort of newfangled vhs kind of thing that looks like a cd, which, apparently, is some sort of newfangled record that is smaller and not black and isn't played on a turntable) with footage of the Shocks jamming across this great world of ours. Good stuff. (STM)
(www.matwrecords.com)

THE ADDICTIONS
self-titled CD
This isn't for you. THE ADDICTIONS switch between girl and guy vocals, neither of which are anything special. I picture these dudes play some sweaty nasty local dive bar and having all the townies go wild. This would have been better released in 1993 on DGC or something. Seriously, they're 10 years too late. People stopped making music like this for a reason. (MWB)
(www.electricfactoryrecords.com)

ALBERTO Y LOST TRIOS PARANOIAS
"Radio Sweat" CD
A lost gem from the early 80s, resurrected by the fine folks at Overground. CP LEE and cohorts were musical geniuses, comic satirists, and exemplars of the British art of parody and taking the piss. Think MONTY PYTHON's music moments. Think the BONZO DOG BAND. Think of all the crap radio DJs, and here you have the best / worst radio show you've never / always wanted. Plus some live gems, and a classic demo. Sheer class. (RK)
(Overground Records, PO Box 1NW, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE99 1NW, UK)

AMERICAN STATIC
"Soundtrack Of The Struggle" CD
Debut full length from the band that was the ROUSTABOUTS. Now then run full pelt at CLASH-era RANCID, and take the whole melodic street-punk, working stiff stuff full on the chest. Nothing wonderfully new, or original, but some heartfelt lyrics and great guitaring help this stand out a wee bit. (RK)
(Street Anthem Records, www.american-static.com)

AN ANGLE
"...And Take It With A Grain Of Salt" CD
I can't believe that this CD was put out by Drive-Thru records. That's a good thing, though! Maybe DTR is ready to push their sound to a new level, releasing something that isn't cookie-cutter pop rock that will sell copies. They began to push the envelop with their releases by STEEL TRAIN, and this one continues to move in a new direction. AN ANGLE is more reminiscent of BRIGHT EYES than STARTING LINE. The list of players is at least 10 deep, all adding their own sound to this release, which is honestly great. Acoustic driven melodic rock at its best. If you dig on bands like BRIGHT EYES or HONORARY TITLE, you'll probably dig this, too. (MWB)
(www.drivethrurecords.com)

AND THIS ARMY
"Doom & Space" CD
Oof–can I get an amen for the CURE? Imagine that and a little JELLO BIAFRA thrown in to the mix. Lots of neu-wave posturing. But what else can you expect from a Brooklyn band? ATA are definitely playing to the hipster crowd here, and if you've got the right jeans and haircut, you just might like em enough to buy this cd. (LD)
(www.andthisarmy.com)

ATOMIC 7
"...en Hillbilly Caliente" CD
Lively instrumental cd full of twang. Nothing particularly groundbreaking, but the playing is fantastic. Would make great background music for an independent film. (JC)
(Mint / P.O. Box 3613 / Vancouver, BC Canada V6B 3Y6)

BAMBIX
"Leitmotiv" CD
BAMBIX are the Dutch great white hope for punk. They mix up the drive, fury and melody of HUSKER DU, TILT, and LIFE...BUT HOW TO LIVE IT, with the sensibilities of the REPLACEMENTS. That they are female-fronted is noteworthy, I guess. That they rock like few others, is undisputable. That you should get this classic (first released at the end of the last century) is mandatory. (RK)
(Vitaminepillen Rec, via Cargo Records, Germany)

THE BAMBOO KIDS
self-titled CD
Far freakin' out man! This is either Stiv Bators' illegitimate children, or the second coming of the KIDS. Throw a little FACES and SWEET influence in there and you have a pretty fucking amazing CD. This is absolutely the best new record that I have heard in a long time. If you live for rock and roll, this is the next CD you need to pick up. (JC)
(Get Hip / Columbus & Preble Aves. / Pittsburgh, PA 15233)

BEHEMOTH
"Demigod" CD
Dude, they're called Behemoth. That's rich. (STM)
(www.olympicrecordings.com)

BIG SCREEN
"Yours Today Mine Tomorrow" CD
Call it nepotism, but it's working for this band who's guitarist is the brother of the frontman for NEW FOUND GLORY. THE BIG SCREEN play chunky power-pop with lots of backing vocals, hooks and anthemic lyrics. It's a nice sampling of that Florida sound that's become such a huge thing over the past few years. Pop-punk fans, listen up. (LD)
(www.undecidedrecords.com)

BLASTMAT
"Chopping Block" CD
4th self-released full length from these CT hardcore dudes. Not that I've heard the previous efforts, but this turns in 8 very able tracks of chugga chugga H / C. Lots of tempo changes, breakdwons, and all that 'old school' H / C stuff you'd expect...(RK)
(www.blastmat.freeservers.com)

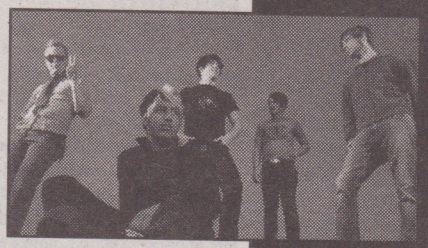
BLEEDING KANSAS
"1859" CD
They're from Burbank. I lived in Burbank when I was 16 for about a year (Burroughs High!). These dudes have every right in the world to sound as angry as they do. Big fat heavy heavy hardcore that cross your noise merchants like BOTCH and COALESCE and ENEWETAK with some of your better punk rock fare like Damaged-era FLAG and dare I say FEAR? Yeah, it's a big nasty bulldozer of a record. (STM)
(www.abacusrecordings.com)

BREATHER RESIST & SUICIDE NOTE
split CD
Before you even listen to these two devastating bands, you're going to be in love with this CD. BEST PACKAGING EVER. This isn't a split CD – it's two separate CDs packaged together. BRILLIANT! And the best part – not only does it look great, but it sounds great, too! BREATHER RESIST are one of the latest and greatest bands to come out of Louisville, featuring dudes with resumes that include the likes of BLACK CROSS, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, and ENDPOINT. You really can't fuck with that. They deliver three powerful, in your face jams to this release, all which will kick your ass. SUICIDE NOTE bring four tracks to the release, including a Didjits cover, and include their video for Gag Reflex as well. "How Not to Care" starts off with some seriously haunting organs, something you don't usually hear from a hardcore band, creating an eerie mood and a rad song. This is a fantastic release, from start to finish. (MWB)
(www.hawthornestreetrecords.com)

BRISTLE
"30 Blasts From The Past" CD
A 'greatest hits' of this Seattle punk trios early offerings, taken from the 3 EPS and LP from 92-97. They attack a variety of the 'political' punker styles with gusto, ranging from the DEAD KENNEDYS to ENGLISH DOGS. All handled with a suitable amount of leather, studs, spikes and aplomb, 30 tracks which don't make the pace, or

interest, flag. (RK)
(Rodent Popsicle Records, www.rodentpopsicle.com)

"BUSH FAMILY FORTUNES: The Best Democracy Money Can Buy" DVD



I wanted to give this a good review, I mean, come on–I fucking hate George W. Bush with a passion and believe that all the heinous information about him that is out there should reach the broadest audience possible. Unfortunately this isn't a very good documentary. It is heavy handed and poorly done. A lot of what could pass as artistic cinematography seems more like padding to stretch not much substance out to over an hour and the hardest points made by this are pretty much common knowledge already to anyone who has seen Fahrenheit 911 and scratched a little below the surface of the matter. The main journalistic force behind it, Greg Palast, comes across as a real egotistical, pretentious jerk, and his interviewing style, which I'm sure he thinks is real cutting edge, boils down to belligerent bullying at worst and a cut rate Geraldo Rivera at best. So in a nutshell, the point of view of this documentary is on the money, but the approach and execution leave a lot to be desired. (JC)
(The Disinformation Company / 163 3rd Ave. / Suite 108 / New York, NY 10003)

CAROUSEL SHY
"We Want To Be In Your Radio We Want To Be In Your Heart" CD
Good songs, bad mix, dumb-ass name. They have piano, horns, and, if I'm not mistaken... I can hear a kitchen sink being played in the background. This could be a really good band if they learn a little Feng Shui. Note to band: you got the goods, cut the crap out and make the record that you are capable of. Right now they are like YO LA ENGO meats a high school jazz band, but they might be totally amazing soon. (JC)
(I Enjoy Records / 12335 Kingsride #359 / Houston, TX 77024)

NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS
"Abattoir Blues / The Lyre Of Orpheus" 2 CD Set
NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS are easily on top of their game right now. This 2 disc set ranks solidly with the best of their work over the last 20 years. Mr. Cave leads us a through a seedy (no pun intended) sociological and mythological tour to the outer reaches of his world. Highly recommended. (JC)
(Mute Records / Anti Incorporated / 2798 Sunset Blvd. / Los Angeles, CA 90026)

CHANNEL THREE
"CH3 Live" LP
CHANNEL THREE were much better than a lot of people give them credit for. This live record captures a great performance from the band. It is well past their commonly conceived prime (it was recorded in 1994), but it captures a lot of what made them a great band. This is a good starting point for somebody to check them out, or a great addition for those already indoctrinated. (JC)
(Re-force / T. rescher / Woehlerhof 4 / 30900 Wedemark / Germany)

THE CHARIOT
"Everything Is Alive, Everything is Breathing, Nothing is Dead and Nothing is Bleeding" CD
CHARIOT is a new band fronted by former NORMA JEAN "singer" Josh Scogin. CHARIOT is not too far removed from Scogin's former band, or most of the bands on the Solid State roster for that matter. Brutal metal from start to finish. These dudes must have something for long titles – as if the album title wasn't long enough, track two is known as "Someday, in the event that mankind actually figures out what it is that this world revolves around, thousand of people are going to shocked and perplexed to find out that it was not them. Sometimes this includes me." I shit you not, people. And to top it off – it's a good song! All the songs are good – 10 tracks in total, none suck. That can't be said for most CDs these days. (MWB)
(www.solidstate.com)

CHEAP SEX
"Headed For A Breakdown" CD
2nd lengthy effort. They're been listening almost exclusively to early 80s UK bands, apparently – y'know, DISCHARGE, CONFLICT, ABRASIVE WHEELS....they do it pretty good too. And hairspray doesn't come cheap, let me tell you. (RK)
(Punk Core, www.punkcore.com)

CHILDREN OF BODOM
"Trashed, Lost, and Strung Out" CD
Friends of mine who dig metal think this band is rad, but I always just giggle at their name. I don't care how you pronounce it, it still sounds like "bottom" and any name with both the words "bottom" and "children" is funny. (STM)
(www.centurymedia.com)

CLARITY PROCESS
"Killing the Precedent" CD
Nothing new here. Pretty straight forward rock. I guess it would fit into the post-hardcore genre, if you need to classify it. I wouldn't go as far as to say it's a bad CD, but it's just nothing impressive. I'd pass on it if I were you. (MWB)
(www.riserecords.com)

THE COPS
"Why Kids Go Wrong" CD
It would be wrong to assume by the title that these are snot-nosed punk rock kids. Actually, what we have here are some experienced 20-somethings playing very cool rock'n'roll with a little bit of Americana flavor. They come from Seattle, land of MURDER CITY DEVILS, and you can almost hear the rain pouring down outside the barroom that they must have hashed out these five tracks in. Very good stuff. (LD)
(www.mtfujirecords.com)

COYOTE
self-titled CDEP
Here we have something dark and decadent, the type of rock that is played in locked dungeons by people in all black. And yet, it's not goth. Mix together new-wave and BLACK HEART PROCESSION, and you'll get a good idea of their sound. It's good, but a little unpolished. And with four songs, it seems like there's not enough to go on. (LD)
(www.thebirdmangroup.com)

COYOTE SHIVERS
"Give It To Ya Twice" CD
New York scum rock hero COYOTE SHIVERS delivers a whopping two-disc set. The first is an open-ended lover letter to Sex, Drugs an Rock and roll, written in all capitols, with Exclamation points at the end of every sentence. Disc 2 is an acoustic, "Open ended love letter...." from more of a morning after, blurry-eyed vantage point. Devotees of Johnny Thunders, Pussy Galore and / or Royal Trux should dig this. (JC)
(Foodchain / 6525 Sunset Blvd / 4th Floor / Hollywood, CA 90028)

DARLINGTON
"Euthanize Me" CD
DARLINGTON are back and they're pissed off, which to me is perfectly fine. If you're not at least a little pissed off right now, your not paying attention. What once was a relatively mild mannered pop punk band is now roaring out my speakers with a politically charged intensity. Not that they have abandoned their melodic side (that's still there), they have just put it all in high gear. The switch to Disaster records might have given them the extra Ooomph that they needed. (JC)
(Disaster / P.O. Box 7112 / Burbank, CA 91510)

DEFIANCE
"Rise Or Fall" CD
4th full length. A lot more eclectic than previous efforts, though they really nailed that UK 82 / Riot City sound. Lots of leather, lots of studs, and as many spikes as balding pates will allow. Includes a MENACE cover. Good stuff. (RK)
(Punk Core, www.punkcore.com)

DENISON MARS
self-titled CD
Well this band's been around for ten years now but hasn't seemed to break out from the alternative christian rock scene. There are few who do - STARFLYER 59 comes to mind. The sound here is very familiar - a kind of bass heavy pop punk. It's very radio-ready, so we'll see if the youngsters can deal with the subtle holiness. (LD)
(www.floodgaterecords.com)

DERITA SISTERS 77
"Back To No Future" CD
A first wave punk rock tribute CD. The DERITA SISTERS do renditions of tracks by the CLASH, REZILLOS, DAMNED, BOYS, X-RAY SPEX, SAINTS and so on. Twenty-four tracks in all and all done really well. Unfortunately, I think the idea of having a golden oldies punk rock covers album kind of misses the whole damn point of punk rock and could only recommend this as a primer to younger listeners who might be exposed to tunes and then go out and round up the originals. (JC)
(Kotumba Records / P.O. Box 40510 / Santa Barbara, CA 93140)

DIVINE BROWN
"The Dirty Gospel According To..." CD
Brits that want to be Swedes (yknow, HIVES, (INTERNATIONAL) NOISE CONSPIRACY), and Yanks (LAZY COWGIRLS) testify. I guess they do the dirty fuzzed out rock n roll thang good enough, but I haven't yet seen the light with em. Lots of others have, so apparently you'll have plenty of chance to believe...(RK)
(Wrecked Em Wrechords, www.wrecked-em.com)

THE DROWN
"Mars Import" CD
This CD is completely different from anything else I've

ever been sent. THE DROWN obviously dig RADIOHEAD quite a bit, and they should because RADIOHEAD is amazing. But they are also reminiscent of some 80's Brit-Pop as well. A lot of electronic beats and saxophones, too. Definitely a more ambient sound than I'd usually dig, but if you're into that stuff, check them out. (MWB)
(www.matchboxrecordings.co.uk)

DUVALL
"O Holy Night" CD
Ok. I don't know if this is fair of me, but I feel immediately put off by this album because I absolutely detest Christmas music. And after the holidays, the last thing I want to hear is more, even if it is played in a punk rock style by ex-members of the SMOKING POPES. It just seems so cheesy, and it's impossible to get away from the Christian message. Make a fartnoise with your mouth - I don't know how to spell it, but that's how I feel about this record. (LD)
(www.asianmanrecords.com)

DYING RACE
"Post Victory Times" CD
I hear some influence from Canadian countrymen PROPAGAHNDI. They have a lot of that skate punk sound & a little of the same leftist politics. All in all, this is a pretty good punk rock record. It sounds old school, it's fun & it's fast as hell. (LD)
(www.lonelytreerecords.com)

EGON
"All Theory & No Action" CD
Here's some pretty solid indie rock. They've got that MODEST MOUSE sound, especially in the dual-octave vocal thing. Some of the rhythms and bass playing remind me of PINBACK. I think anyone into the 90's indie sound would dig this band. (LD)
(www.hasanyoneevertoldyou.com)

EVERY TIME I DIE
"Burial Plot Bidding War" CD
M'kay. I know there's gonna be some fans out there that are really stoked on this one. After a couple of years of nonexistence, this band's first EP is finally available. Hear what they were like when they were starting out, before they exploded onto the hardcore / neu-metal scene. Fanboys and girlfriends who "heart" CONVERGE, HATEBREED, & POISON THE WELL, get your groove on. (LD)
(www.undecidedrecords.com)



FAR-LESS
"Turn To The Bright" CD
They are a screamo band. They're on Tooth & Nail. Not sure why they're not on Solid State. Either way, you've heard this band many many times on these labels. If you like these labels and their bands, you'll like this. If you don't, you won't. (MWB)
(www.toothandnail.com)

FATAL FLYING GUILLOTEENS / THIS MOMENT IN BLACK HISTORY
split CD
Two younger bands that I already totally dig. Both play a kind of crazed blues drenched acid-punk rock. At least one of them has put out releases on Estrus records and I'm pretty sure both are Tim Kerr approved. THIS MOMENT IN BLACK HISTORY rip out a fairly gigantic cover of one of my all time favorite DEVO songs. (JC)
(Gold Standard Laboratories / P.O. Box 65091 / Los Angeles, CA 90065

FEMME FATALITY
"Never Had A Daddy" CD
When it comes down to it, these guys suck. A retro- new wave send up, that at first is pretty entertaining, but wears thin quick. A lot of it comes across like an open love letter to cocaine. (JC)
(Collective Records / www.collectiverecords.com)

FIFTY FOUR SQUARE FOOT TRAMPOLINE
"That Simple" CD
If you can get past the first song, this album's pretty good. It's filled with lo-fi slow jams a la LOW or SONGS: OHIA. Nice & somber & perfect for a winter night. Only gripe is it's a little disjointed due to the compilation of tracks from earlier demos. Pretty good overall. (LD)
(www.hillbillystew.com)

FISHBONE
"Critical Times: Fishbones's Hen House Sessions" DVD
This is a lengthy view of the legendary L.A. ska / punk / funk / etc. band FISHBONE as they go through the process of heading back to the recording studio again. If you are already a FISHBONE fan, you will probably love this in depth look at their artistic process. New, or casual fans might get a little bored, because this can, at times, be a little slow and rambling, and doesn't exhibit much of an overall narrative. I can definitely recommend it for the fans, or people like me who are documentary junkies. (JC)
(MVD / P.O. Box 280, / Oaks, PA 19456)

FIVE MINUTE RIDE
"The World Needs Convincing Of All That It's Missing" EP
This one will fit right into the Screamo genre, appealing to fans of bands such as GLASSJAW and UNDEROATH. These dudes all look pretty young, and apparently one of their members died last year, which absolutely fucking sucks. Congratulations to them for keeping it going in spite of that – that can't be easy. Definitely better than most of the screamo drivel that is out there, and the EP was produced by Kurt Ballou, so you know it's gonna sound better than 90% of what you own. (MWB)
(www.riserecords.com)

FLESHIES
"Gung Ho" CD
Collection of 16 tracks all recorded pre-winter 2003. Tracks that range from the near epic to the plain silly. Good band. Fun compilation. (JC)
(Life Is Abuse / P.O. Box 20524 / Oakland, CA 94620)

FRANKLIN DELANO
"Like a Smoking Gun In Front Of Me" CD
It's come to this. Our Americana has to be imported from Italy. Well, we're lucky because this new band is a real treat. If you're a CALIFONE or LOW fan, you'll like this record. Also, there's a similarity to that swaggering sound of GIANT SAND. Really nice droney, post-folk going on here. I love it! (LD)
(www.file-13.com)

FRONTSIDE FIVE
"No Pegs" CD
Denver Sk8 punks with their self-produced / released debut LP. And pretty good it is too. Lots of songs about skating tough, but that's ok. They don't quite scale the heights of the FACTION (whom they cover), STUPIDS, or JFA, but this is good hardcore, for sure. Time to hit the half-pipe. (RK)
(www.frontsidefive.net)

THE FUTUREHEADS
self-titled CD
THE FUTUREHEADS make bath time fun! Careful though, you might just slip and crack your skull open when you can't resist dancing around to their infectious beat. Easy comparisons could be made to The JAM and The UNDERTONES: tight bouncy rythyms, smart lyrics and clever vocals, melodies and harmonies. Comparisons be damned though, these guys are fresh and exciting and this is a really, really good record. (JC)
(Sire / 679 Recordings / www.679recordings.com)

GARRISON / ORANGE ISLAND
Split CD
Two of the more popular bands to come out of Massachusetts over the past few years got together for this split, before GARRISON broke up, obviously. They each do one of each other's songs, and then one original. Pretty decent release, and not a bad way to remember GARRISON, who played their asses off for us up here in Boston for the better part of 6 years. (MWB)
(www.lonsesomerecordings.com / www.allaboutrecords.com)

GLORY OF THIS
"Adoration" CD
Another hard-edged pop rock band with some screaming. Nothing that's going to light your world on fire, but a decent release. GLORY OF THIS is actually a little bit tougher than most of the bands of this genre, so they've got that going for them. I wish they'd give up the pop and stick to the hardcore, because that's what they do best. "Loose Lips Sink Ships" is your best bet as far as tracks from the CD go. Definitely worth picking up if you're into BOYS NIGHT OUT, UNDEROATH, FINCH, etc etc. (MWB)
(www.indianolarecords.com)



GLORY OF THIS
"Adoration" CD
Brand spankin' new and already played the Warped Tour this past summer. It's certainly true that their brand of power-pop / punk rock is infectious. I think this band has a lot of potential to get really big, so pick this up now, and get in on it before they blow up. (LD)
(www.indianolarecords.com)

LOS GRISWOLDS
"Bring The Rock!" CD
I can't tell you how sick I am of bands like this that

celebrate pretend trailer park romance and posture like they 'really know how to rock.' I've seen the SUPERSUCKERS, these guys aren't the SUPERSUCKERS and I am waiting for them and a hundred bands like them to cut it out already. (JC)
(www.losgriswolds.com)

GUNS UP
"All This Is" CD
I'll say it again, Riley, where's my tour vinyl? Don't play with fire, son. Anyhow, back to GU. Awesome band, awesome record. Before the first song was done, I wanted to see this band live. If they are 1 / 10th as intense on stage as they are on record, it should make for one amazing show. Imagine PATH OF RESISTANCE with one singer. No, even better, imagine JUDGE jamming with TERROR on some CRO-MAGS covers. (Postscript: I put this album back on my stereo and listened to it after I finished doing reviews. I never do that! It's that good! And holy shit! As I write this, I see on hardcoremusic.com that they are playing SF tonight! What are the chances!) (STM)
(www.1917records.com)

GWAR
"Throws a War Party" CD
The best part about a new GWAR record is that it means there should be a new GWAR tour coming soon. This CD delivers the same menacing hilarity that you are used to from the masters. Possibly a bit more politics mixed in than usual, but there is nothing wrong with that. (JC)
(DRT / 45 West 21st St. / New York, NY 10010)

HEADING SOUTH
"Last Car Outta Richville" CD
8 track effort. Melodic Danish punk in the vein of (early) RANDY, NO FUN AT ALL, and early PROPAGANDHI. Worth tracking down, if that's your bag. (RK)
(www.headingsouth.dk)

HOODS / FREYA
split CD
An old warhorse and a phoenix rising from the ashes. Sacramento's infamous HOODS throw down their familiar apocalyptic thugcore while the former EARTH CRISIS boys in FREYA deliver a refreshing and pulverizing clusterfuck of rock, hardcore, and metal. How can you deny this thing? You buy seven thousand shitty records by shitty bands each year. It's time to buy one by seasoned veterans who know what the fuck they are doing. (STM)
(www.victoryrecords.com)

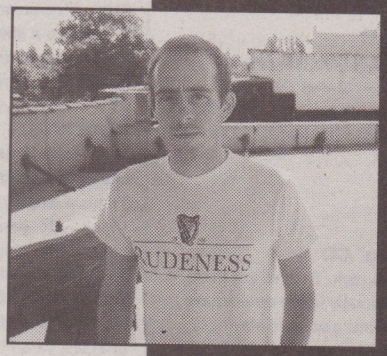


INKWIZYCJA
"Stare Fotografie" CD
12 tracks of driving Polish 'post-punk'. Think some angry Europeans covering WIRE's "Pink Flag", stripping it of most of the catchy tunes, and sounding a little pissed. Beautiful packaging. (RK)
(Nikt Nic Nie Wie, www.nnnw.pl)

JESU
self-titled CD
Rolling Stone called the man behind this project, Justin Broadrick, a visionary. I'll add that he's coming from a history of bands like GODFLESH & NAPALM DEATH. So what you have here is someone experienced & focused. And he's created a goddamn wall of noise that's as intense as it is beautiful. Give this one both ears. (LD)
(www.hydrahead.com)

JOE JITSU
"Start It Up" CD
Fairly weak pop–punk. Hints of J-CHURCH and GREEN DAY, but not nearly as good as either. JOE JITSU turns in a solid, but not very compelling, performance and seeing as there are all kinds of bands that sound similar, you really need something to stand you apart from the crowd–this release doesn't do it. (JC)
(Top 5 / www.listen.to / topfivercords.com)

KAADA / PATTON
"Romances" CD
Fans of MIKE PATTON know that he is consistent in one thing: change. His many projects from FAITH NO MORE to TOMAHAWK to his latest partnership with BJORK on Medulla have put him somewhere in the genre of "other music". This new collaboration with Norwegian composer JOHN KAADA is his most accessible in my opinion. Much inspired by classical composers like CHOPIN, what is created here is something truly unique. It's a mixture of classical, experimental, weird vocalizations & electronics. In short, it's something wonderful for everyone. Go get it! (LD)
(www.ipecac.com)



KASH
"Breath Is Everywhere / Kash" CD
A quartet from Italy. this compiles their first 2 EPs from 2002 and 1999. Both were engineered by Steve Albini. All 12 tracks are, er, very diverse, discordant, make lots of space and time - typically within the same song. Noisy, but with a structure, I guess. I suspect lots of folks groove on this weird shit. And a SMITHS cover. (RK)
(Sickroom Records, PO Box 47830, Chicago, IL 60647)

KILL YOUR IDOLS
"From Companionship To Competition" CD
New full length from the NYC hardcore legends. Driving, punishing HC in the heroic tradition of POISON IDEA and the FUs. They do it good too, with just the right dash of metallic guitar. (RK)
(Side One Dummy, www.sideonedummy.com)

KILL YOUR IDOLS
"From Companionship to Competition" CD
Do you guys ever stop? I love your band, but it seems like every box of review materials contains at least one KYI release. I'm never disappointed though. Here we go with a brand new full length that has that familiar balls-to-the-wall fast and angry hardcore that KYI seems to have brought back from the dead when metal ruled the hardcore earth. (STM)
(www.sideonedummy.com)

THE KILLER
"Better Judged By Twelve Than..." CD
From the windy city comes a brutal hardcore troop with all the angry singalongs and bone crushing breakdowns you need, but also a fair amount of a crusting, grindier hardcore. Mix your DYSTOPIA with your HATEBREED and you've got this impressive album. (STM)
(www.organizedcrimerecords.com)

KREATOR
"Enemy Of God" CD
Do you really think God cares about your 80s thrash band? Anyhow, that's what this is, an old 80's thrash band that was pretty good back then and don't totally suck now the way most 80's thrash bands suck when they come back. Dudes who wear flannel but hate Nirvana are stoked on this. (STM)

TED LEO + PHARMACISTS
"Shake The Sheets" CD
I like TED LEO + PHARMACISTS a lot; they're easily one of the best power pop outfits in existence. Each record of theirs reminds me of why I like them while also bringing something fresh to the table. If you are looking for a record that will just brighten your afternoon with the sheer craftiness of it, this is the one. The songs don't hit you over the head; they just kind of keep creeping back up on you. Long after I listened to this, I had it in my head and was eager to get it back in the stereo. (JC)
(Lookout! Records / 3264 Adeline St. / Berkeley, CA 94703)

LIGHTS OUT
"Get Out" CD
Fuck yes! One of Norcals newest and brightest represent here with a handful of new tunes and their demo. Trashy, thrashy hardcore that is equal parts MENTAL, CARRY ON, GORILLA BISCUITS, and INFEST. These young bucks tear through their tunes with righteous ire, youthful energy, and hardcore pride. Go buy this album and taste some of Norcal's best modern core. Go see them live and you'll never want to have children. Features members of LAB RATS, DEAD IN THE END, and a bunch of other stupid bands nobody cares about. I'm kidding. But seriously, Andrew's head is oddly-shaped, Kevin is as creepy as a horny priest, and Connor looks like a ostrich with a learning disability having a seizure when he "moves it". That's ok though because, even as severely flawed human beings, they create some sweet, sweet hardcore. Now get out and pick this up. (STM)
(www.youngblood-records.com)

LORDS
"The House The Lords Built" CD
Fast, brutal, and, most importantly, original. I listened to this CD twice before I knew what hit me. Hardcore like I like it, heavy like BLACK FLAG and just enough weirdness that punk bands out of places like Louisville, Kentucky are known for. Well worth hunting down. (JC)
(Initial / P.O. Box 17131 / Louisville, KY 40217)

MALAJUBE
"Le Compte Complet" CD
All I can say is j'aime les MALAJUBE!! Cd of the

month, most assuredly. A wonderful mixture of brit-pop style, a hint of BLOOD BROTHERS, and a whole lot of sexy artpunk. Oh, and it's all in french, so you know it's extra hot. I want to see this band play with LES GEORGE LENINGRAD! If you didn't know, Montreal is the new it town, so get with it. Tres bien! (LD)
(www.daretocareerecords.com)



MANDA & THE MARBLES
"Angels With Dirty Faces" CD
I don't know if the world is ready for another sassy power pop band, but if you are one of the diehard fans, this one is for you. Their sound recalls the GO-GO'S and other new wave 80's pop groups. The music is very positive, shimmery and keyboard-laden. LIZ PHAIR & IMPERIAL TEEN fans, check this one out. P.S. - they do an AVENGERS cover. (LD)
(www.sickhouserecords@yahoo.com)

MDC
"Magnus Dominus Corpus" CD
It's a new MDC LP. Better yet, it has 3 / 4 of the original (1st LP) line up. Perhaps, surprisingly, it's up there with that mightly first disc. Stop on a dime thrash, tight melodies, impassioned vocals, committed lyrics, and a large vat of wit, and poison. If you've been avoiding em for 20 years, or forgotten how good they were, now's a fine time to reconnect. (RK)
(Sudden Death Records, www.suddendeath.com)

MEANS
"In Red Grace" CD
OK - this is a first. This cd has an intro track where the bandleader says boldly that "all this music is for Jesus - the best decision we've ever made." Wake up! This is the Bush administration's wet dream! Christian hardcore is for assholes! P.S. the music is nauseatingly cheesy and over-dramatic. (LD)
(www.lonelytreerecords.com)

MELVINS / LUSTMORD
"Pigs Of The Roman Empire" CD
The first track on this is simply entitled III. It is intense, dramatic and apocalyptic. Words that are not uncommon to hear in regards to the MELVINS (I'm not as familiar with LUSTMORD), but for some reason this time it make me think this could be their offering of a soundtrack for world war III. Maybe I am reading to much into it. All in all, this CD blows my mind. Nuff said. (JC)
(Ipecac / P.O. Box 1778 / Orinda, CA 94563)

MEMBRANES
"Kiss Ass Godhead" CD
This was the 4th LP from the art-damaged shizo punkers. This originally came out in 1988. Very reminiscent of BIG BLACK. A piledriving Steve Albini production certainly helps. As with all the Overground reissues, this is laden down with wonderful liner notes and bonus tracks. (RK)
(Overground Records, PO Box 1NW, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE99 1NW, UK)

ROGER MIRET AND THE DISASTERS
"1984" CD
While this newish project by AGNOSTIC FRONT frontman Miret is more Los Angeles punk rock than his NYHC legacy would lead one to expect, it is nonetheless a severe, sincere, and sweet album. Combine all those great old L.A. bands like the FLAG, GERMS, and JERKS with some of the catchier English acts and then pour a bit of that great L.E.S grime over it and you've go this album. Well worth the money for those who know that hardcore and punk have to do with hard times and hard living as opposed to great hair and great dance moves. (STM)
(www.hell-cat.com)

MXPX
"B-Movie" DVD
All of the bands that are making bank this day and age owe a debt of gratitude to MXPX. These dudes have been doing what they do for what seems like forever, and while never quite reaching the level of a GREEN DAY or BLINK-182, they made a name for themselves in a time when it wasn't cool to listen to pop punk like it is today. This is their first DVD, and just what fans of this band are looking for – not to mention, it comes with a free EP. Holy shit, what a deal! The SideOneDummy dudes do it again! (MWB)
(www.sideonedummy.com, www.hellbentrecords.com)

NAGG
self-titled CD
Let's face it. '70s rock and roll is back in a big way. Which is fine if you get bands like NAGG who seem to draw from the right influences: AC / DC, RUNAWAYS, The SWEET etc. and throw in a handful of rock solid crowd pleasing covers of artists like SUZI QUATRO, PAPER LACE, SLADE and JOHNNY BURNETTE. Seems like a good idea to me, but let's make sure that we don't get too stuck in the past and forget about the future, alright? (JC)
(Dollar Record Records / www.dollarrecord.com)

CASEY NEILL
"Memory Against Forgetting" CD
A greatest hits / odds n ends collection, from the Celtic folk-rocker. It's certainly really great. Includes remastered tracks from his legendary (now out of print) debut LP, together with some melancholy classics - both solo acoustic, and with the band, from more recent times. BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN's "Nebraska" springs to mind, cept CASEY does it a lot better. Seriously. (RK)
(AK Press Audio / Daemon Records, www.akpress.org)

NEW FOUND GLORY
"This Disaster – Live in London" DVD
Live footage DVD showing an entire set from NEW FOUND GLORY in London. 19 songs in total, the boys play all the hits that have made them oh so popular. So during their incredibly long set, the power went out and they continued the rest of their set playing acoustic. Now that's fucking dedication right there. Oh, and I thought this was supposed to be a band that the chicks dug. From what I can see of the crowd, this was one big sausage fest. (MWB)
(www.geffen.com / www.drivethrurecords.com)

NONE MORE BLACK
"Loud about Loathing" EP
So by now I sure as hell hope you all have bought the NONE MORE BLACK full length release last year. So think of the best song on that CD...whatever song is your favorite...and multiply the goodness factor of that song by at least 5. That's this CD. For real. Their first release was amazing, so to say that this is head and shoulders above the last is truly saying something. Six songs that show the same spirit and sound that NONE MORE BLACK have created, pushed to the next level. The first track, "Oh, There's Legwork" has some of the sickest drums you will ever hear on any CD. Amazing timing...plus, how can you not get better when you get Dave Wagenshutz to play drums? Maybe KID DYANMITE breaking up was a good thing – because now we have two kick ass bands coming from their asses instead of just one KID D. Just a thought....(MWB)
(www.sabotproductions.net)

THE ONE INCH PUNCH
"Horsehead Nebula" CD
Moody and atmospheric. Comparisons to NEUROSIS could be made, but I'm not sure if I am ready to make them. Mostly instrumental, unless they are screaming. It's like math rock for beginners (pre-math rock 101?) I like this OK, but I don't see myself playing it again anytime soon. (JC)
(Collective Records / www.collectiverecords.com)

ONE TRUE THING
"Finally..." CD
Pretty decent female-fronted rock band. Sounds kind of like a cross between two of the more prominent female-fronted bands to come out of the scene in recent history, DISCOUNT and TSUNAMI BOMB. Singer Melanie Wills did some work on FROM AUTUMN TO ASHES' last CD, so you may recognize her from there. And apparently the bassist was a founding member and original singer of TAKING BACK SUNDAY. That's worth at least 2,000 scene points right there! Upbeat numbers like "Wish I Was Everything" and "Who's Amazing" help carry this release beyond the slower, dreary numbers, which are a little too numerous and hold this release back. Overall, a decent start to what could be a nice career. (MWB)
(www.playtheassassin.com)

OREIRO
"Heartfelt Words" CD
7 tracks of angst-driven, agnostic Polish aggressive emo. Lots of heavy guitars. Lots of screaming. All in Polish. With handy English translations for those that want to sing along...(RK)
(Nikt Nic Nie Wie, www.nnnw.pl)

OUTFOXED: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism DVD
Every single person in America needs to see this film. If you have ever questioned the new industry, if you have ever had even the slightest inclination that what you are being told isn't necessarily the entire story (and PLEASE say that you have; if you haven't, you've got fucking problems), you NEED to see this. Giving you an inside look at the uber-right Fox News Network, you'll see why "Fair & Balanced" reporting apparently means kissing G Dubya's ass. It'll make you sick, and if it doesn't, something is wrong with you. PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE go watch this film. (MWB)
(www.disinfo.com)

SOUNDSCAPE MUSIC REVIEWS

PAINT IT BLACK
"Paradise" CD
Has Dan Yemin ever been involved with anything that wasn't the absolute best thing out there? I don't think so. His streak most certainly continues with Paradise, PAINT IT BLACK's second full length release. Fast and aggressive like CVA, but with a touch more rock thrown in, somehow the band managed to learn how to play songs that take 1:30 instead of just :30. Branching away from the more personal lyrics of CVA, Paradise takes a look at the ills that plague our society today, with a mostly political slant. They've outdone themselves this time. This could quite possibly be the best hardcore CD you buy this year. (MWB)
(www.jadetree.com)

PERFUMA
"Humans are Dangerous" EP
PERFUMA are the latest pop-rock offering to come out of New Jersey. Seriously, what the fuck is up with this state? At least 4,325,432 bands have come outta Jersey since LIFETIME. It's completely insane. Anyway, these guys do it a little different, adding a bit more maturity and polish to their style than some of their counterparts, but not in an over-produced, artsy type of way. Quality song writing with quality lyrics which would probably tickle your fancy if you dig on bands like THE EARLY NOVEMBER or ARMOR FOR SLEEP. (MWB)
(www.radiobreakdown.com)

PLAN OF ATTACK
"Working Dead" CD
Old school glory with bitter lyrics, blazing riffage, and juicy fucking dancefloor justice style breakdowns. Throw on your cammos and your Slapshot shirt, put Blood, Sweat, and No Tears on the car stereo, and haul ass to the local vets hall to mosh the rainy afternoon away. That what this record represents to me and, quite frankly, that's what it's all about. (STM)
(www.organizedcrimerecords.com)

POST REGIMENT
"Halas" CD
Great, energetic, melodic, female-fronted Polish anarcho-punk. Think the SUBHUMANS, LOST CHEREES, IKON AD, and A-HEADS. Fortunately, the booklet includes English translations. This is really good. Well worth tracking down. (RK)
(Nikt Nic Nie Wie, www.nnnw.pl)

THE PRIESTS
"Tall Tales" CD
Another amazing new release from Get Hip! This CD is a sultry, down and dirty slab of garage rock that makes me feel like it's 1966 and I'm cutting class, high on strychnine. Man, I need to listen to this one a lot more in 2005; it hits the spot. (JC)
(Get Hip Recordings / P.O. Box 666 / Cannonsburg, PA / 15233)

QUIET RIOT
"89' Live In Japan" DVD
This is material about five years past their commercial peak and about ten years past their legendary club act peak. Their enigmatic lead singer Kevin Dubrow is gone and the band is doing what every metal band past its prime does: play Japan to throngs of rabid fans. At this stage of the game the seem to be trying really hard to be WHITESNAKE and it's plain bad; I think most fans of this band, like me, preferred them when they were trying to be the American version of SLADE. (JC)
(MVD)

THE REAL MCKENZIES
"Pissed Tae Th' Gills" DVD
The REAL MCKENZIES are a hell of a lot of drunken fun. Also, they have some damn great tunes. This DVD captures them at a lively club show and also has some great extras. Not just for St. Patrick's Day, this is a band to be enjoyed year-round. (JC)
(Sudden Death Records / www.suddendeath.com)

RED LETTER M
self-titled CD
The good and bad news here is that this band's sound is all over the place. Reggae beat is interchangeable with rap and indie rock. But it's not as bad as it sounds. Apart from the brief hip-hop moment, the album works. I enjoyed it. (LD)
(redletter_m@yahoo.com)

REPERCUSSION
"And The Winner Is..." CD
This band brings the pain with some classic old school tough guy hardcore ala MADBALL, BULLDOZE, 25TALIFE, PUNISHMENT and what have ya. This takes me back to the days of basketball jersies, brass knuckles, and crew beef. Mosh the fucking night away until a rumble breaks out by the stage and then either fight or flee because the blood was gonna spill. hahaha. Yes! I love this album. Don't fuck around. If you are a fan of hardcore that indie kids and fashioncore kids both detest, this is the album for you. Pure hardcore with no bullshit attached. Features members of SHATTERED REALM (STM)
(www.spookcityusa.com)

SAY BOK GWAI
self-titled CD
A San Francisco duo that jigs in utter ridiculousness as they hop from genre to genre while laying Cantonese vocals over it. While they clearly rep punk, hardcore, metal, and even the trashy pop of early nineties Berkeley, they come off more as the sort of experimental and eccentric underground music that was prevalent in these parts in the late eighties. While they don't really sound like them, I gotta put this band down as the smart-ass little punk rock brother of THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS, VIOLENT FEMMES, MR. BUNGLE, and CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN. I guess others may classify it with all that trendy ironic noise core of late, like everything that comes out of San Diego. Fuck, I don't know. It's a strange trip, but a fun one for sure. And there's a few sweet lifted riffs, including the classic "Don't Fear The Reaper" line. So yeah, check this out. Imagine WARLOCK PINCHERS in Cantonese. (STM)
(www.monkeykingrecords.com)

SHINDIG
"This Beginning Is Your End" CD
SHINDIG is really just one guy named Richie Ray. His songs are acoustic based with lots of guitar, and a little percussion. The emphasis is on the lyrics, which are bitter and tragic. Ray is getting lots of attention, playing huge shows and winning over the hearts and minds of sensitive types everywhere. He's not WILCO or IRON & WINE, he's more like your favorite emo band unplugged. (LD)
(www.undecidedrecords.com)

SHORT STORY
"I Kissed You Goodnight" CD
I could see why this stuff would be hot shit in bum fuck Canada or somewhere - oh wait, it is! And the double bass drum offsets the whiney lyrics & gives the music some balls. Not bad for youngster pop punk. (LD)
(www.lonelytreerecords.com)

SIXTEENS
"Fendi" CD
This band really embodies the bay area post new-wave sound. Tons of keyboard, robot vocals, like ADULT, and distorted guitars. This zombie NEW ORDER thing is really big around here & THE SIXTEENS are one of the better bands doing it. They're dark, tragic & dance to the beat. (LD)
(www.hungryeyerecords.com)

SK8 OR DIE
"Not In My Skatepark" CD
I was all ready to just disregard this CD because it looked so cheesy. I was wrong though, this CD is totally radical, gnarly and bitchin,. Almost an homage to classic skate punk. They should have taken the inner picture, done it in black and white and slapped a Placebo or mystic records logo on the back. (JC)
(Hill Billy Stew / P.O. Box 82625 / San Diego, CA 92138-2625)

SLUNT
self-titled CD
Sounds to me like a cross between L7 and HOLE, neither of which I particularly like. They play hard and have some talent, but they just don't do much for me on record. Probably a blast live, though. (JC)
(Repossession Records / P.O. Box 548 / Pacific Palisades, CA 90272)

JOSH SMALL
self-titled CD
Finally some swear words in bluegrass music! Unfortunately, the F-words seem to be covering up for mostly dull lyrics. I wish I could say I loved this, but the truth is that I found it to be kind of boring. Maybe if there was more to the arrangements it would work better. (LD)
(www.popfaction.com)

SOMETHING CORPORATE
"Live at the Ventura Theatre" DVD
Two boring CDs. Two boring DVDs. I'm sensing a trend here... (MWB)
(www.geffen.com)

SOPHOMORE YEAR
"You Are Here...She Is There" CD
GA pop-punkers debut LP. They have that whole socal melodic pop / punk thing down. Think major label UNWRITTEN LAW, or BLINK 182, minus the million dollar production values. Sounds good. If you haven't overdosed on that genre, then you'll certainly suck up th is latest sugar-coated offering. (RK)
(Search & Rescue Records, searchandrescuerecords.com)

SPARTA
"Porcelain" CD
This is a hell of a record. Definitely the best of the post AT THE DRIVE IN releases. This is a passionate and spirited release from start to finish. They have the unique ability to play this kind of music with emotion, without it sounding Emo. (JC)
(Geffin / 2220 Colorado Ave. / Santa Monica, CA 90404)

STEREOTYPERIDER
"Prolonging the Inevitable" CD
Here's a very decent post-hardcore record. Lots of interesting rhythms and little additions that make this sound better than a lot of their colleagues. Check it out. (LD)
(www.stereotyperider.com)

STEREOTYPERIDER
"Prolonging the Inevitable" CD
HOLY CRAP! ROCK MUSIC STILL LIVES!! It's NOT screamo, it's not emo, it's not punk, it's not hardcore, its not even post-hardcore. This is just rock!! This is a great fucking CD! I'm not even going to waste time saying "this sounds like blah blah blah mixed with blah blah blah." JUST GO BUY THIS!!! And also you should be happy knowing that buying this CD would be supporting one of the best labels out there, run by one of the best dudes out there. If that alone isn't enough to make you buy this, I don't know what is. (MWB)
(www.suburbanhomerecords.com)

STREET DOGS
"Back To The World" CD
This is the sophomore release from Boston's STREET DOGS, and it far surpasses their first effort. And guess what? Their first CD was fucking rad, so what does that tell you? This is one of those CDs that you have to buy. It has it all – aggressive street punk, fast old-time hardcore, straight up rock, and more, but all the while keeping the sound that the STREET DOGS have made a name for themselves on. Best known for being fronted by former DROPKICK MURPHYS front man Mike McColgan, this will show you why this more than just another "ex-members of" band. In fact, it's not a stretch to call this one of the best Street Punk CDs of the last 10 years. Released on their own Brass Tacks imprint, STREET DOGS are going to take the world by storm this year...just make sure you jump on the bandwagon while there's still room. (MWB)
(www.street-dogs.com)

THESE LIES
"....More Than They'll Ever Know" CD EP
7 tracks of straightforward piledriving punk, with a FILTHesque raspy vocalist. Pretty good, if you like that sort of thing. (RK)
(Rodent Popsicle, www.rodentpopsicle.com)

THINGS IN HERDS
"I Can Dancing & Walking" CD
What a sweet little record. It's a bedroom project that rises above the normally cheap masturbatory sound. You still have the drum machine and synth sounds, but here they are charming and well-placed. I'd recommend this to fans of PEDRO THE LION or even older BECK. Quiet and lovely. (LD)
(www.undecidedrecords.com)

TOXIC BONKERS
"Blindness" CD
TB (!?) are keepnig the spirit, not to mention the sound, of EXTREME NOISE TERROR and BOLTTHROWER alive and kicking...in Poland. They do sing in English. Not that you could really tell that the hoarse grunting is in English. I dunno, mebbe it is in Polish, and it's just the lyric sheet in English. Lots of grind, lots of thrash, lots of chug, lots of double-kick drum. Ho hum. (RK)
(Nikt Nic Nie Wie, www.nnnw.pl)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Anti-War: Anarcho-Punk Comp. Vol. 1" CD
The first of three proposed CDs, this is a wonderful testament to, and document of, the early 80s UK anarcho-punk scene. Spawned / inspired by CRASS, for sure, the early 80s saw 100s of bands, in a variety of genres and styles within the broad punk church taking up that mantle, and running with it. Of the 23 tracks, many of them never made it past the demo-tapes of the DIY underground, and many are released here for the first time. A real cross-section of who was doing it then. You'll find classics from the likes of DIRT, ZOUNDS, METRO YOUTH, the ASTRONAUTS, ANTHRAX, A-HEADS, SYSTEM, INSTIGATORS, LOST CHEREES, RIOT / CLONE, YOUTH IN ASIA, NAKED, OMEGA TRIBE, ANTI-SYSTEM, FACTION, BLOOD ROBOTS and more. The big booklet contains photos and info on / by all the bands. An essential purchase, and musically, a real fucking treasure. (RK)
(Overground Records, PO Box 1NW, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE99 1NW, UK)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Give Em The Boot IV" CD
The latest sampler from the Hellcat roster, featuring some damn fine punk rock, psychobilly, reggae and hardcore. You'll find unreleased (soon to be hits) from RANCID, SLACKERS, F-MINUS, DIE HUNNS, DROPKICK MURPHYS, NEKROMANTIX, the TRANSPLANTS, JOE STRUMMER AND THE MESCALEROS, the UNSEEN, DUCKY BOYS, PRESSURE POINT, WESTBOUND TRAIN and a dozen more previously available winners. (RK)
(Hellcat, via Epitaph)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Organized Crime Records-CD
Is this a sampler? A compilation? I don't know because the shitty xeroxed artwork they sent me is about as confusing as calculus. What redeems it are all the sweet bands it brings together. While you are basically getting fast and angry hardcore with little divergence from that description, the bands here do it quite well. Highlights include THE KILLER, MODERN LIFE IS WAR, KILL YOUR IDOLS, and PLAN OF ATTACK. (STM)
(www.organizedcrimerecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"World Wide Noise Attack" DVD
Representing the world of punk noise as seen mostly through the eyes of dudes who drink beer and play power chords. Would it have been too hard to a few more bands with a little estrogen in the whole wide world? That aside, this is pretty entertaining. Stand out artists would be BLITZKRIEG, MOUTHGUARD, JJ SPEEDBALL and HAGGIS. Also Viktor's tour of Australian fruit trees is almost worth the price of admission. (JC)
(Retch / 48 Rose Cresent / Woodvale / Southport, Merseyside / England / PR8 3RZ)

VIBRATORS
"Live At The Nashville '77 & The 100 Club Festival '76" CD
The first (and bulk of the tracks - 19 of em) gig features the VIBRATORS at the height of their power. And having just finished recording their first classic LP. The sound quality is good, the band is great, ad fans'll want it. The '76 show is a slice of history, for sure, recorded from the audience, and is pretty shitty quality wise. (RK)
(Overground Records, PO Box 1NW, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE99 1NW, UK)

VIBRATORS
"Volume 10 / Unpunked" CD
Two LPs from the 1990s from these stalwards. "Volume 10", recorded in 1990, has 13 tracks f their pub rock / pop ditties. You should really just get their first two records. "Unpunked" is 10 tracks, rerecorded 'acoustically' (acoustic guitars, bass and drums) from those first 2 classic full lengths. The strength of songs like "Judy Says" and "Automatic Love" shine through, but this is definitely one for the diehards. (RK)
(Overground Records, PO Box 1NW, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE99 1NW, UK)

WATCHERS
"Dunes Phase" CD
If you want shit that's so current that it almost hasn't happened yet, try this out. The first song "To the Rooftops" is an amazing kickoff to this no-wave dance jam. Call it art rock or whatever, this band is on another level altogether. You will love it -I promise! (LD)
(www.gernblandsten.com)

THE WEDDING PRESENT
"Take Fountain" CD
If you don't already know, THE WEDDING PRESENT are and were huge. Especially in their native England, but here too, in a sort of cult status. They were one of the most influential indie bands of the late 80's to mid-90's.So first of all, if you don't have their old stuff, go out an start with "Bizarro" and "Seamonsters". Now on to the new album - the first one in almost 10 years due to frontman David Gedge occupying himself with CINERAMA. Immediately this new record just explodes. With the epic beauty of "Interstate 5" to the witty pop of "I'm From Further North Than You," it's really a wonderful comeback for a much loved band. (LD)
(www.manifesto.com)

WEEGS
"Meet the Weegs" CD
This is what it would sound like if your band instruments got possessed & began to play on their own! Very rigid, disjointed rhythms, post punk vocals, post-mortem vibe. Check out this new one from the land of the fog. (LD)
(www.hungryeyerecords.com)

WHOLE WHEAT BREAD
"Minority Rules" CD
If I put this CD in for you and you knew nothing about this band, you'd think it was the latest West Coast punk band. Fast, aggressive punk rock with hooks, WHOLE WHEAT BREAD sound like they're right out of the OC. You'd be wrong. Hailing from Jacksonville, FL, WHOLE WHEAT BREAD is made up of three dudes who don't buy into the fact that you have to look punk and dress punk to play punk. Wearing baggy jeans and big chains, the three members of WHOLE WHEAT BREAD do what they want to do and dress how they want to dress, not buying into the scene shit that plagues us today. What a novel concept! All 11 songs are catchy as shit and invite you to sing-along and pump your fists in the air. I'm not digging the bonus tracks, which gives the guys a chance to show of their hip-hop skills – but the release itself is fantastic. Oh, did I mention the dudes are all black? (MWB)
(www.fightingrecords.com)

WLOCHATY
"Zmowa" CD
Polish anarcho-punk. Lots of tracks, a hefty booklet (including English translations of the lyrics, which is always a good thing for the non-Poles amongst us). Musically, they draw on the best (and most diverse) of the old UK anarcho bands. Very CRASS and CONFLICT. But a good smattering of ANTHRAX and OMEGA TRIBE too. Good stuff. (RK)
(Nikt Nic Nie Wie, www.nnnw.pl)

WOKE UP FALLING
self-titled CD
Here's some new emo rock for ya. These dudes are pretty gung ho and it's obvious they pour their hearts into their music. There's a backbone of gothic pop here, maybe just in the influences. Not bad. (LD)
(www.post436records.com)

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HYDRA HEAD FERRET VAGRANT FAT WRECK EYEBALL
DISCHORD ROBOTIC EMPIRE SUICIDE SQUEEZE IPECAC
POLYVINYL TRUSTKILL GSL RELAPSE TOOTH AND NAIL
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SECRETLY CANADIAN CENTURY MEDIA ESCAPE ARTIST
THREE ONE G SOUTHERN STILLBORN GOOD LIFE
CHUNKSAAH TRIPLE CROWN SOME SUB POP BARSUK
FEARLESS FRENCH KISS TORTUGA DRIVE THRU INITIAL
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TRACK 1
BAND: OPEN HAND
SONG: "Tough Guy"
RECORD: You And Me
RELEASE DATE: 2/22/05
LABEL: Trustkill Records
WEB: www.openhandrocks.com
www.trustkill.com



TRACK 2
BAND: ROGER MIRET & THE DISASTERS
SONG: "Riot, Riot, Riot"
RECORD: 1984
RELEASE DATE: 2/22/05
LABEL: Hellcat Records
WEB: www.hell-cat.com



TRACK 3
BAND: EMANUEL
SONG: "The New Violence"
RECORD: Soundtrack To A Headrush
RELEASE DATE: 3/15/05
LABEL: Vagrant Records
WEB: www.vagrant.com



TRACK 4
BAND: FOUR LETTER WORD
SONG: "Scared Of The Dark"
RECORD: Like Moths To A Flame
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: The Newest Industry
WEB: www.thenewestindustry.com



TRACK 5
BAND: NORMA JEAN
SONG: "Bayonetwork: Vultures in Vivid Color"
RECORD: O' God The Aftermath
RELEASE DATE: 3/1/05
LABEL: Solid State Records
WEB: www.normajeannoise.com



TRACK 6
BAND: MAROON
SONG: "The World's Havoc"
RECORD: Endorsed by Hate
RELEASE DATE: 2/8/05
LABEL: Abacus Recordings
WEB: www.maroonhate.com



TRACK 7
BAND: SYMPHONY IN PERIL
SONG: "For Now We See In A Mirror, Dimly, But Then Face To Face"
RECORD: The Whore's Trophy
RELEASE DATE: 2/15/05
LABEL: Facedown Records
WEB: www.facedownrecords.com
www.symphonyinperil.net



TRACK 8
BAND: TRANSISTOR TRANSISTOR
SONG: "Power Chord Academy"
RECORD: Erase All Name & Likeness
RELEASE DATE: 2/22/05
LABEL: Level Plane Records
WEB: www.level-plane.com
www.level-plane.com



TRACK 9
BAND: WINTER SOLSTICE
SONG: "Following Caligula"
RECORD: The Fall of Rome
RELEASE DATE: March 8, 2005
LABEL: Metal Blade Records, Inc.
WEB: www.wintersolstice.net



TRACK 10
BAND: 7 SECONDS
SONG: "Panic Attack"
RECORD: Take It Back, Take It On, Take It Over
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Side One Dummy
WEB: www.sideonedummy.com
www.7seconds.com



TRACK 11
BAND: KADDISFLY
SONG: "New Moon Over Swift Water"
RECORD: Buy Our Intention; Will Buy You A Unicorn
RELEASE DATE: 3/8/05
LABEL: Hopeless Records
WEB: www.hopelessrecords.com
www.kaddisfly.com



TRACK 12
BAND: NEW CRASH POSITION
SONG: "Dopesick Girl"
RECORD: Music To Rob Banks To
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Handout Records
WEB: www.newcrashposition.com,
www.purevolume.com/newcrashposition
www.myspace.com/newcrashposition



TRACK 13
BAND: HERMANO
SONG: "Cowboys Suck"
RECORD: Dare I Say...
RELEASE DATE: 2/15/05
LABEL: Meteor City Records
WEB: www.meteorcity.com
www.hermanorocks.com



TRACK 14
BAND: RUMBLESEAT
SONG: "California Burritos"
RECORD: Discography
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: No Idea Records
WEB: www.noidearecords.com



TRACK 15
BAND: FOREKNOWN
SONG: "Lessons In Manhood"
RECORD: Calm Seas Don't Make Sailors
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Blood And Ink Records
WEB: www.bloodandinkrecords.com



TRACK 16
BAND: THE ZIMMERMANN NOTE
SONG: "New Deception"
RECORD: New Deception
RELEASE DATE: 2/22/05
LABEL: Innerstrength Records
WEB: www.thezimmermannote.com
innerstrengthrecords.com, cmdistro.com



TRACK 17
BAND: INTO THE MOAT
SONG: "Dead Before I Stray"
RECORD: The Design
RELEASE DATE: 3/8/05
LABEL: Metal Blade Records, Inc.
WEB: www.intothemoat.com



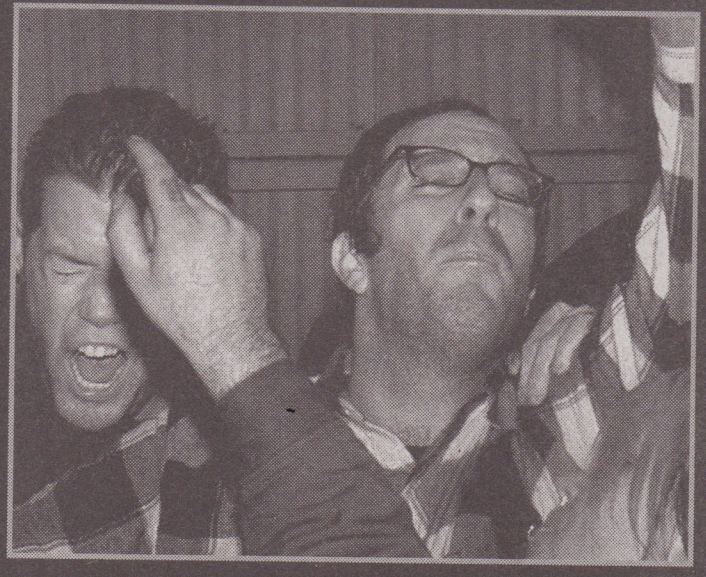
TRACK 18
BAND: THE GOODWILL
SONG: "Live From the Red Carpet"
RECORD: Insult, Injury, Etc...
RELEASE DATE: 3/8/05
LABEL: Abacus Recordings
WEB: www.thegoodwill.com



TRACK 19
BAND: ANBERLIN
SONG: "Paperthin Hymn"
RECORD: Never Take Friendship Personal
RELEASE DATE: 2/1/05
LABEL: Tooth & Nail Records
WEB: www.anberlin.com



TRACK 20
BAND: ALOVE FOR ENEMIES
SONG: "The Hour Of Decision"
RECORD: The Harvest
RELEASE DATE: 3/8/05
LABEL: Facedown Records
WEB: www.facedownrecords.com
www.aloveforenemies.com

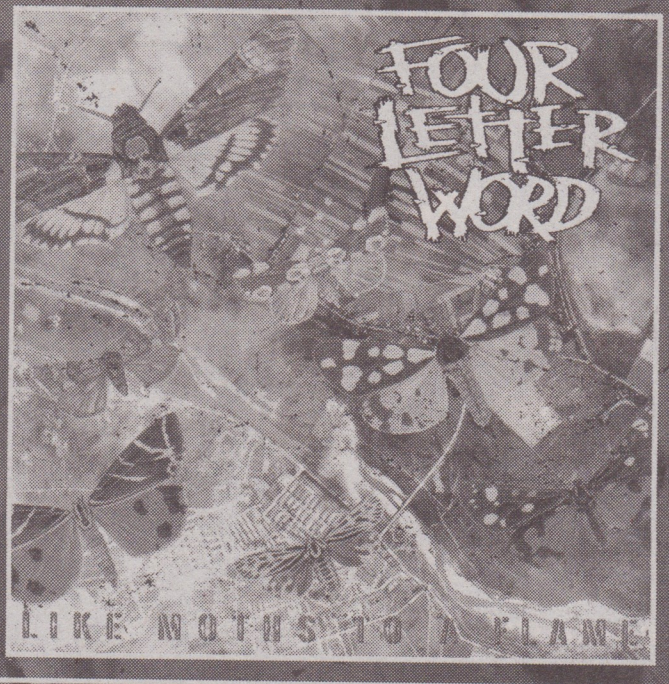


TRACK 21
BAND: THIRTY3
SONG: "Confrontations And Alarm Clocks"
RECORD: Ether
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: State Of Grace Records
WEB: www.stateofgracehc.com

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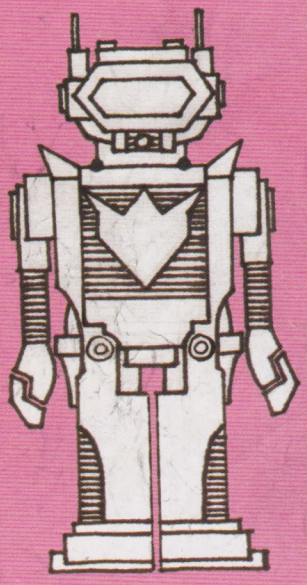


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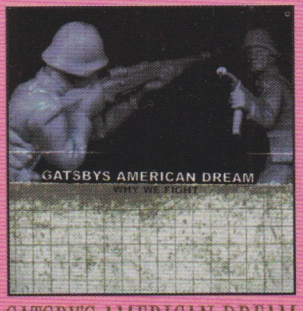
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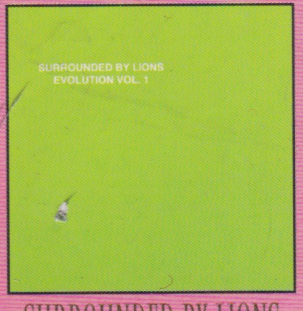
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